PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES AMONG PROFESSIONAL SAILORS: GENERIC KEYS TO THE STUDY OF AN OCCUPATION

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

TOTAL OF 10 PAGES ONLY
MAY BE XEROXED

(Without Author's Permission)

JOHN ROPER SCOTT

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES AMONG PROFESSIONAL SAILORS: GENERIC KEYS TO THE STUDY OF AN OCCUPATION

by

© John Roper Scott, B.A., M.A.

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Folklore

Memorial University of Newfoundland

July 1985

St. John's Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which personal experience narratives function within a specific occupational group, the individuals who work on modern, ocean-racing sailboats. The examination employs the methods and materials of folklore to arrive at conclusions about those functions. The basic thesis is that members of a folk group use their narrative traditions in communication among themselves and in performance situations, and that an understanding of these uses contributes to the interpretation of the evidence given in the narratives about the occupation.

The methods of research have included the study of modern folkloric analysis of personal experience narratives, personal involvement in the group and the collection and examination of tape recordings, written notes and recollections about the occupation. These include recordings of narrative events in context as well as directed interviews.

The study begins with descriptions of the group and its normal activities and of the author's participation within that group. It then describes the genre and the forms in which it manifests itself among the group members. Next, it describes the ways in which the members of the group use the narrative tradition when communicating among themselves, and finally, it demonstrates the ways in

which the performance of the narratives is used to portray images of individuals to other individuals and images of the group to other groups.

The work concludes that there are many means by which an ethnographer can evaluate the evidence given by specific individuals about an occupation through scrutinizing their narrative traditions. Form, content and total repertoire are keys to the storyteller's place within the occupation, as is his treatment by other performers and performance teams of the occupation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Frederick A. Aldrich, Dean of Graduate Studies, sanctioned the start of this project with encouragement and a University Doctoral Fellowship. When it was no longer possible for me to stay in residence at M.U.N., he was always at the other end of the bridges which spanned what could have been communication gaps. His help was never more in evidence than in the final stages when sickness made every step seem to take longer than necessary or permissible.

To the Department of Folklore and those who have been at its head during the past ten years, Kenneth S. Goldstein, Neil V. Rosenberg and David D. Buchan, I am also extremely grateful.

Perhaps the only thing which kept this work in the current millennium was Larry Small's counseling on how to limit the scope of a dissertation. It is also he who has suggested sources and waded through the roughest of drafts, all the time offering encouragement for which I shall always be especially grateful.

David Buchan and Raoul Andersen also read through a typescript which was somewhere on the spectrum between idea and first draft, and they did so in painstaking detail for which I thank them.

The individuals named in the Appendix, expecially Jeff Foster, acted not only as informants but as friends,

confidants and even sponsors. While nearly all were and are friends, each willingly allowed me to ask slightly more than friendship would normally dictate. They acted not only as informants, but they also played sounding board for many of the ideas incorporated here.

Finally, I should like to thank Karen Lemieux who recognized that the first draft was in the English language and rendered it recognizable for others, and Bob Baker, a nitpicking proofreader, who tried to change it back.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER TWO - PROFESSIONAL SAILORS AS AN ESOTERIC GROUP 11

- INTRODUCTION 11
- THE RACING SCHEDULE 15
- GROUP SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS 23
- INITIATION 29
- AN EXOTERIC PERSPECTIVE 31
- OCCUPATIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY 33
- CONCLUSION: OCCUPATIONAL STATUS 37

CHAPTER THREE - OF SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP 39

- INTRODUCTION 39
- THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN FOLKLORIC REPORTING 44
- GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND THE COLLECTOR 49
  - Introduction 49
  - Rapport 50
  - Analysis of Materials 53
  - Analysis of Context 55
  - Analysis of Style, Content and Function 57
  - Time 60
  - Collecting Contexts 60
- SPECIFICS 64
  - Recorded Material 64
  - Other Collecting Methods 68
  - Printed Sources 69
- CONCLUSIONS 75

CHAPTER FOUR - FORM AND CONTENT OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES 77

- INTRODUCTION 77
- FORM 77
- CONTENT 107
  - Foolish Behavior 117
  - Outrageous Behavior 125
  - Life On Board 130
  - Navigation 144
  - General 157

The Unusual 158
Weather 164

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENRES 168
CONCLUSIONS 175

CHAPTER FIVE - PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES AS COMMUNICATIVE DEVICES 176

INTRODUCTION 176
CREATION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES . 177

Actions 179
Reporting 185
Repeating 197

DISSEMINATION AND LONGEVITY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES 205

Repertoire Control 206
Appropriation of Other Storytellers' Stories 209
Distance from the Event 213
Context Control 219

CONCLUSIONS 221

CHAPTER SIX - PERFORMANCE AND THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVE 222

INTRODUCTION 222
RESPONSIBILITY IN PERFORMANCE 226

Introduction 226
Solicitation 229
Attribution 239
Augmentation 243
Confirmation 248
Contradiction 250
Group Narration 252
Conclusions 253

CONTEXTS 255

Introduction 255
Audience 258
Physical Setting 260
Function 261
Conclusions 263

STYLE 263

REPERTOIRE 268

Introduction 268
Individual Choice 268
Contextual Demands 271

CONCLUSIONS 273

CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSIONS 274

REFERENCES 280

APPENDIX I 284

APPENDIX II 330

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Narratives about personal experiences constitute one of the many means one has at one's disposal for the communication of own's own character and personality to others. A major portion of one's character is established through association with groups, whose common denominators may be rooted in occupation, sex, age or any of a large number of identifying associations. The purpose of this study is to investigate the forms and functions of the personal experience narrative, and the approach taken to this investigation is the isolation of a small group and the explication of how personal experience narratives operate within the group thus isolated.

An individual is not simply the sum of his actions, but he is seen to be the sum of the actions which he presents to the public. There is a constant process at work, albeit subconsciously at most times, by which each of us selects and prepares for broadcast certain elements of his experience which he feels are representative of his character. He then seeks the proper environments in which to present the elements thus selected and prepared or the forums in which the seasoned material will be appropriate for presentation.

The desired result of this exercise is to demonstrate how, at least in one definable group, personal experience narratives function in the definition of the characters of the individuals involved and of the character of the group

itself and how the definition of the group affects the elucidation of the characters of the individuals.

The process employed to achieve this result begins in a description of the group of professional sailors and of my own participation in that group. It continues with a theoretical discussion of the ways in which an ethnographer's involvement with a group affects his perspective and his ability to collect and to analyze material. Next is a description of the forms of personal experience narratives and their contents, followed by discussions about the narratives as communicative devices and as performance media.

Chapter Two is designed to introduce the reader to the occupational group under study. Briefly, it is a group consisting primarily of men who make a living working on the toys of other men. Ocean racing sailboats are exclusively a means of recreation, since they produce nothing but physical and mental exercise for those who sail on them, and even the prizes are in the form of trophies rather than any cash rewards. A few British races pay cash prizes, but these are paid only to the professionals, and the sums are purely token amounts.

After introducing the group through a description of the principal festivals in its calendar, the chapter continues with descriptions of what makes the professional sailors a folk group, viewed from both esoteric and exoteric points of view. Simply stated, the group sees itself to have an identity as such, and outsiders readily recognize

its existence as a group.

The chapter concludes with a brief account of my own experience as a sailor, presented in the light of membership criteria for the group. This establishes my own viewpoint for the reader as well as giving some additional background for the group itself. This is an essential section, because the theory presented in Chapter Three is based on the degree of acceptance as a group member which the ethnographer has.

The theoretical stance presented in the next chapter is straightforward. Folklorists still suffer from the feeling that they must go outside their own cultures or at least their own groups to do interesting research. This is based in both egocentrism and ethnocentrism and assumes that each of us knows all that is necessary to know about his own society and the groups within it, and this is simply not true. I am by no means insisting that folklorists do research only within groups of which they are card-carrying members, but I would insist that each ethnographer owes it to his discipline and those related to make a statement about groups of which he is a member. This need not be his life's work, but he should bring his academic ability and his esoteric knowledge together in at least one project. Furthermore, in reporting the results of his research, he should include enough about himself so that others may assess the effects that he, as an individual, had on the materials collected and on the analysis of those materials.

The next section of this chapter discusses briefly some of the advantages to be gained from doing research in a group of which one is a member. Again, this is not meant to exclude the possibility of solid work being done in groups in which we claim no membership. In fact, the ideal situation would have more than one folklorist with differing degrees of preconception about, and disparate experience with, the group making roughly synchronized studies. The chapter concludes with a description of how these theoretical views manifested themselves in my own research.

Chapter Four is a generic description of the personal experience narrative as it exists within the group described. It presents separate descriptions of the forms in which narratives exist and then presents a longer narrative session to show the ways in which these forms coexist. The strength which folklorists bring to the study of what people say about themselves is that they are more prepared than other ethnographers to identify those elements of conversation which are communal property within a given tribe and, thus, to evaluate the extent to which personal experience narratives and the other related genres function as cohesive elements within a group.

Folklorists have apparently recognized this as their strength, because disciplinary fashion no longer insists that, to be traditional, a text must exist in the hands of many tellers. On the contrary, multiple performances by a

single individual may be considered traditional if they continue to function for the individual, the community or both. One may begin to see from this discussion that conversation is not a series of unrelated position statements, made in turn by each of the participants, but that the course of the conversation and the resulting narratives contributed by the individuals are under some constraints from the form of the conversation itself.

While the storytellers seem to be under some rules dictated by the drift of the conversation, the conversation itself does not appear to be restricted in that way. The section on the content of the narratives explains that there are some topics which are not likely to come up in a conversation on board a racing sailboat and that there are others which are almost certain to be aired, but it also shows that the direction of the discourse can wander virtually at will. The breakfast session from the Ft. Lauderdale Race starts with the toilet habits of Australian sailors and ends with Ted Turner and the Atlanta Braves baseball team in the hallowed halls of the New York Yacht Club.

The discussion then turns to a detailed analysis of the contents of the narratives. Contents of the collection are first viewed from a statistical vantage point, and then transcribed examples are presented within a classificatory framework. The narratives included as examples here also help elucidate points made later in the work, and these later discussions are previewed briefly.

The final section of Chapter Four discusses the relationship of personal experience narratives to other genres, principally the joke, from the point of view of form. It points out that, without a knowledge of the context or the group, one may easily mistake jokes and personal narratives for each other. It also differentiates between the attitudes of the narrator of personal experience stories and those of the tall tale teller.

The task of Chapter Five is to discuss personal experience narratives as communicative devices. It begins with the experiences themselves and follows them through the several creative stages which see them reported, repeated, selected from repertoire, altered to fit specific contexts, amended for aesthetic reasons and shared among the group members.

It is possible to see in the reporting stage that the motifs begin in the hands of individuals, are weighted and balanced by the group and then returned to the hands of the individual storytellers for repetition. The creation of a single narrative can certainly be an exclusively personal affair, but it can also be communal. A storyteller may use the motifs provided by his cohorts to provide context for the basic story element which he sees as the dominant one, or he may combine several, equally balanced elements into a cohesive narrative. He acts more like an editor than an author, and in that sense the creation is

certainly communal.

After a story is created and repeated, it may continue to exist in fragmentary form in the minds of some who have heard it, and then one may see cooperative, if not conspiratorial, efforts to recreate the entire narrative. Also, an individual may suspend his telling of a given story until he is reminded of the details either by other narrators or by circumstances. Thus, one may see personal and communal aspects in the later life history of stories.

Ownership of a particular story will often fall to the most proficient storyteller present at the event, but even later in the existence of the story one may still hear echoes of its communal origins. In discussing David Kellett's story about almost hitting a sleeping whale on the Bermuda Race, Steve Haesche said, "I was asleep, but many times I've told that story, 'Well, we were going along . . .' I was closer to the whale than he was. It's as much my whale as it is Kellett's, although I was asleep."[1]

The concept of ownership leads us to the discussion of esoteric and exoteric contexts. In an esoteric group, where the narratives function as communicative devices, the whale is definitely Kellett's, but to an audience comprised

---

[1] 78/3/2/432. Taped references follow this format: Year recorded/tape number/side number/tape counter number. Other references take the form "780316, Steve Haesche". This form identifies the specific narrative in the given collection and the narrator. This one is the sixteenth narrative in the collection beginning with tape 78/03.

of non-members, the story of the whale could belong to anyone on the boat at the time or to anyone who could plausibly have been on the boat at the time. The rules governing who tells which story and what stories may be told change dramatically when the esoteric group performs its narratives as a team before an exoteric audience, and this is the topic of Chapter Six.

In esoteric communicative contexts, each performer is basically responsible for choosing which stories he will tell and when he will tell them and for the image of himself presented by them. In performance situations, responsibility for the image is assumed by the group, and specific individuals will take the responsibility for which stories are told and the timing of their telling.

Those who take this responsibility have several tools at their disposal for the manipulation of the group image thus portrayed. They include solicitation, attribution, augmentation, confirmation, contradiction and participation in group narration. By the use of these, the directors can make the group's repertoire appropriate to the specific audience and the constraints of the physical setting of the performance, and they can make the session function in the desired way for the image of the group.

Depending on how strong his desire is to foster the group image being put forward, the individual performer, while stripped of choice in most matters of repertoire, may

still be a weak or a strong contributor, as dictated by the style of his contributions. Even the most communal of efforts, then, are subject to the personal, stylistic feelings of the individual performers.

The study of personal experience narratives is an important element in the study of occupational groups. To obtain a true picture of the occupation, one must be aware while he is gathering evidence from individual members that there are degrees of membership and that those most willing to provide information may be those who are least qualified to portray the occupation. If he is stifled in esoteric conversations because of his lack of experience, he may be grateful for an opportunity to tell stories of the occupation to outsiders in situations where there is no threat of contradiction from members of higher occupational status and greater experience.

By studying the repertoire of the individual in the light of the group repertoire and by taking note of the status he has on the group's performance team, one may then filter his direct statements about the occupation and the portrait painted in his narratives through the sieve of his occupational status. One may note also whether, in interview situations, a particular informant stays steadfastly to the topic of the occupation or whether he is secure enough in his own concept of his membership status that he wanders freely with the drift of the conversation.

Does he find it necessary, in other words, to declare his membership status overtly, or is he content to let the sum of his narratives make the declaration?

In communicative situations, the storyteller is speaking mostly about himself, while, in performance contexts, he is virtually forced to talk about the group. What follows is an attempt to rationalize the two and to set some guidelines, or at least to establish the questions to be asked in the setting of these guidelines, for the use of personal experience narratives in the ethnographic description of an occupational group.

As a discipline matures, certain concepts appear to become the common property of those who practice the discipline. Through continued usage and even debate about their precise meanings, these concepts are separated from those who first conceived them and also from those whose surveys of the lives of these concepts brought them to the attention of the discipline. This thesis has its theoretical base in the functional approach to folklore and relies heavily on the theories of communication and performance as they exist within the discipline of folklore, and it would be improper not to acknowledge the work of those who brought these theories to a place of importance within the discipline but whose work may not be cited directly within this thesis.

The aim of the selected bibliography in Appendix II is twofold. First, it is designed to give credit to those who conceived and defended particular theories. Through them it will also give credit to their spiritual antecedents. Secondly, it should provide a good starting point for those who may wish to study a given concept in greater depth.

One who studies the idea of "performance" as it exists in folklore studies may find some ambiguity. For purposes of this work, "performance" refers to the stage of communication using shared materials in which the performer is conscious that he is using all of the tools at his disposal to entertain, educate, amaze or even frighten his audience. It does not simply happen, but it rather is made to happen by a conscious effort of the narrator.

CHAPTER TWO - PROFESSIONAL SAILORS AS AN ESOTERIC GROUP

INTRODUCTION

The group under consideration here consists of professional sailors who refer to themselves as "boat niggers". The use of the term, "nigger", has no racial meaning as such, but it does allude to slavery because of shared features such as long working hours, little if any pay other than room and board, second-class status and its subculture self-consciousness within the class of wealthy yacht owners and their friends. They often refer to this latter group as "the white folks" and to each other as "boy", further indicating sympathy with the slaves' status.

The members of the group take pride in their membership, so the term has no disparaging connotations whatever, and in fact, the opposite is true. The epithet is granted only by the group, and it must be earned. Once it has been earned, however, it is a virtually permanent title. One may even find a job in "the real world" and begin sailing as an amateur and yet still retain his former status as a boat nigger. The frequent use of the term, "the real world", indicates that, while professionals take their work very seriously, there is a basic feeling of absurdity arising from the fact that the entire occupation exists to support the play of wealthy individuals.

What distinguishes the proper boat nigger from the larger body of professional yacht captains is principally his ability as a racing sailor, which causes him to work primarily on racing sailboats. When need dictates, he will certainly work on boats which do not race and on power boats, or if invited, he might sail as an amateur on other racing boats, but neither variation changes his status.

Many boat niggers have impressed their owners enough with their abilities sailing and organizing the boats' activities that they have been asked to work for the owner in his business or have been set up in business by the owner. Incidentally, the ambiguity as to what the owner owns, whether the boat or the individual, is consciously left obscure. Even this does not change his group status, because it is the greatest possible compliment to the way he performed his job.

There has been an interesting change in the relationship between the owners and professionals over the past several decades, and this is a reflection of the over-all change in American society. The racing yachtsman of today is no longer the stereotyped wealthy blue blood, but is more often a self-made man who enjoys racing for the sport of it. If not in financial resources, the owner and the professional of today are much closer in social class than would have been the case only a generation ago. In those days the professionals were known as paid captains, usually

wore uniforms and did not move in the same social circles as the owners.

There are several distinct areas of competence which the racing professional must have, and they include cosmetic maintenance of the boat, mechanical maintenance, seamanship and navigational skill in both racing and delivery situations and executive ability in the organization of the boat's schedule and of its major overhauls in boatyards. With cosmetic and mechanical maintenance, the ideal is to stay ahead of both, but this is not always possible. Some owners, particularly among the very serious racers, will forgive cosmetic deficiencies as long as all of the systems work properly.

The boat nigger must have a "split personality" in terms of his seamanship ability. When the owner is aboard and the boat is racing, he must be as reckless and speed conscious as anyone aboard, and he should be ready instantly to repair the inevitable gear failures which result from hard driving of the vessel. These same individuals who lead the headlong charge against the race course are the ones one might see leaving for the delivery to the start of the next race, showing greatly shortened sail to moderate winds. It is of equal importance to be reckless on the race course and to be conservative in delivery situations. In racing, stories of broken equipment and wild speeds show that the proper effort was made, while delivery stories

only laud speed if it was achieved at no expense to caution.

As well as being responsible for the manual labor and for the seamanship, the professional is responsible for large sums of the owner's money and represents him in all of his dealings with boatyards and other service operations. He must also ensure that the boat keeps to the schedule set by the owner, so it is his organizational ability in using his own skills and those of the service organizations which is the basis of his success in the profession.

In my own case, the fact that I am not good at dealing with mechanical problems has been overlooked because I have the seamanship ability and have been able to coordinate the maintenance of the mechanical components. The owner's satisfaction is based on the boat being ready for each race, and there is a great deal of trading among the professionals on different boats before the races start. The organizational ability is often manifested in knowing when to barter time and skills with other professionals.

Although the tone of this collection tends away from the serious and practical aspects of the occupation, it must be emphasized that, for the most part, those who practice this occupation take their work and their responsibilities very seriously. Since their own lives and those of others on board may well depend on how well they have prepared their boats for sea, the professionals must

maintain a level of seriousness about their work. The intensity on this level may contribute to the frivolity in the group's recreation. Useful, occupational information may well be contained in the narratives, but it is seldom the point of the story.

The characteristics of a boat nigger are that he is a competent member of the racing crew, that he be able to deliver the boat safely from race to race and that, through whatever combination of talents, he is able to have the boat completely ready for the start of each race. In this combination of skills, he is not unlike an 18th or 19th century shipmaster, whose job was multi-faceted and whose success often depended on speed, daring or cunning. Having established these characteristics, let us examine what a representative schedule might be.

THE RACING SCHEDULE

Since the one feature which distinguishes boat niggers from other professional yacht captains is their ability to race and, thus, their penchant for working on racing boats, their calendar is based on the biennial schedule of world ocean racing.

Although the emphasis may be shifting due to the popularity of some new international competitions, the major world ocean racing series are still the Onion Patch, the Admirals Cup and the Southern Cross Cup. The first two are

raced in the northern hemisphere's summer on alternate years, with the Onion Patch taking place on even numbered years. The Southern Cross takes place in the Australian summer and begins in December of the odd years. Each series revolves around one race of over six hundred miles, respectively the Newport-Bermuda Race, the Fastnet Race and the Sydney-Hobart Race. The last is run every year, but the organized international competition is reserved for the odd years.

The owners of international racing boats will usually try to make these races or even to gain membership on their country's team, because it is at these events that the best competition will be found. Although the time and expense of shipping or sailing the boat to Australia may preclude participation in the Southern Cross for some owners, most aim to test their boats and crews against just such competition.

Given a structure based on the races, there are many other races which may form part of a two-year program for a particular boat. The Southern Ocean Racing Conference (SORC) is held in Florida and the Bahama Islands each winter. Like the major international competitions, it combines races of varying lengths to form a series, and the major race is the St. Petersburg to Ft. Lauderdale Race which covers four hundred and fifty miles.

As well as the many other races which are on a regularly scheduled basis, there are some, such as races across the Atlantic, which depend on willing sponsors at each end for each particular race. For example, the race from Newport, Rhode Island, to Cowes, U.K., in 1975 was timed so that the boats would arrive in plenty of time to race in that year's Admirals Cup.

In formulating the schedule for a racing boat, the professional must take several factors into account. The first consideration is which races the owner would like to do. Then, given the fact that a good average speed for one of these boats is one hundred and fifty miles per day, the owner must consider the time involved in moving the boat from one race to the next. The boats can be trucked or shipped, but often it is less expensive and less complicated to have the boat sail on its own bottom. If there is a race going in the appropriate direction, the solution is clear.

Kialoa's schedule for the 1975 and 1976 races is a good example of how such schedules are constructed. Kialoa is a seventy-nine foot aluminum boat, which has been rigged both as a ketch and as a sloop in her career. At most times, she has two full-time professionals and several other sailors who help deliver her and are paid on an hourly basis when there are specific jobs which need to be

done on board that are not directly tied to the sailing of the boat. Mike Mitchell refers to the latter as "Whale Shit", since, as he says jokingly, there is nothing lower than whale shit, and that is the only thing lower than a boat nigger. Here, Mitchell refers to the self denigration described in the derivation of the term, "boat nigger".

Kialoa began 1975 by racing the SORC which ran from January to March. After spending a short time in Florida following the races, she was delivered to Annapolis, Maryland, by the professional crew. In June, she raced in the Annapolis to Newport Race, and this brought her to Newport in plenty of time to start the trans-Atlantic Race to Cowes. This again brought her to the start of another series. Although she is too big to be one of the team representatives in the Admirals Cup, she still raced all of the major races, as these are open to non-team boats as well as to the national teams. Following the Fastnet, she raced to La Rochelle, France, and was then delivered to yet another series in the Mediterranean. When this racing was completed, the professional crew had between two and three months to take her through the Suez Canal to Australia for the Southern Cross.

In the course of this year's racing, the decision was made to alter the underbody of the boat. It was a major operation, involving removal of the keel and the reshaping

of it before it was replaced and the boat could race again. This was done in New Zealand after the Tasman Sea Race, and following the alterations, she was sailed by the professionals across the Pacific, through Panama and on to Newport in time for the start of the Newport-Bermuda Race. The fall saw her proceed to Florida for the 1977 SORC. Although this is only one example of the kind of schedule which could be followed by a racing boat, it is certainly representative, and it also provides a framework within which to discuss the social ramifications of such a schedule.

While the job and the racing are certainly important to the professionals on board, as are the deliveries and the exotic places to which they take the crew, there is also a concurrent, biennial round of festivals to which the professionals look forward.

The most ritualized of these is the Quiet Little Drink which takes place immediately after the Sydney-Hobart Race, in the otherwise quiet town of Hobart, Tasmania. The event first took place in the 1960's when two Australian sailors, Tony Cable and Johnny Dawson (known as "Cables" and "Dawso"), decided to see not how much beer their friends could drink but how much they were willing to buy, or "shout", for their friends. They made arrangements with a local pub owner to have a few friends in to his establishment for "a quiet little drink". The following morning,

they boarded a bus which they had chartered for the day and which they had stocked with a keg of beer, and they scoured the docks and the inns of Hobart for those who were invited, approximately one hundred in number.

They drove around in the bus completing their pickups until it was time for the designated pub to open, and they arrived as a sleepy owner was opening the door. Realizing the shock to the poor man, they volunteered a few of their number to handle the bar, and the party began. As I mentioned, the purpose was not to drink copious amounts of beer, although that must certainly happen, but to buy in those amounts. To record the progress of the effort, Cable and Dawson wrote each purchase on a chalkboard, noting the name of each buyer's boat and the running total of beers bought by the crew of that boat. As each new round was bought, the money was put in a bucket, and a song was sung in honor of the buyer.

Another major feature of the Quiet Little Drink is that most of the participants were called on for a song or story, but Cable and Dawson kept a very tight control of who spoke and when, and many of the stories had been screened beforehand. The only exception to this was that the foreigners were allowed to do unscreened material, but they still had to receive permission to take the stage.

The first year was such a success that this tradition has continued each year, and similar events have been

organized during the Admirals Cup, and attempts have been made to start a similar tradition following the Newport-Bermuda Race. In the original context, it is not unusual for Australian sailors to practice throughout the intervening year to perfect their routines for the Quiet Little Drink.

The year I was present in Hobart, nine thousand, six hundred beers were purchased by the crowd of perhaps two hundred persons. The beers were ten ounce half pints, called "Middies", and the per capita consumption certainly did not reach the forty-five beer level, but - again - consumption was never the consideration. The bar was lined continually with fresh beers, and the guests simply drank what they wanted to drink. Each year, the publican keeps track of the number of beers drawn, adds a gratuity in consultation with Cable and Dawson and also takes the cost of any damages. The remainder of the bucket's contents is donated to the Crippled Children's home in Hobart. A new pub is chosen each year, so that each establishment can expect to reap the benefits of such sales and to bear the brunt of such a crowd's activities on only an occasional basis.

While the Quiet Little Drink is an example of the most formalized festivals in the boat niggers' calendar, there are many other levels of festival throughout the

biennial round. Each major race, for example, will hold at least one cocktail party, and there will more likely be one held at either end of each race. These are good staging areas, because one is likely to see everyone one knows who is there, and smaller gatherings can be organized. In every town frequented by the fleet, there is a favorite bar, where one could also expect to make contact with his friends who are in town. A good example of such a place is Peter Aswego's "Cafe Sport" in Horta in the Azores.

The marina where the boats are docked is always another staging area, and dock parties are often planned there or happen spontaneously. If any member of the group lives in the area, he may be brave enough to organize a gathering at his home, or if any member is going through a rite of passage, any sailors in town would be likely to gather in celebration.

On a more personal basis, each crew will usually have a crew dinner before and after each race, and these occasions often bring together old friends and shipmates who may not have seen each other for long periods. Crews are often put together on the basis of their having sailed with each other in the past, so these dinners are often reunions. Individuals will also manufacture other reasons to meet, including meetings of sailing clubs.

In any of these circumstances, and particularly at the major sailing events, members of the group will look for one

another, and they will satisfy their mutual thirst for news of the total membership through the exchange of personal experience narratives. Because the example of a schedule presented here is only one of many possibilities, one must realize that two individuals may only see each other once or twice in two years to understand the importance of these narrative sessions to their comprehension of what is happening in their profession.

GROUP SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

The most important, single piece of evidence for the existence of a folk group among these professional racing sailors is the fact that the members see themselves as a definable group. Once gained, membership status is difficult to lose, and this is perhaps true because it is not easily gained. Not only are there requirements in terms of ability, but one must also satisfy criterion of time commitment, and even seniority is not enough in itself. One must work at some time on a boat which is successful, because the success of that boat reflects on one's success within his profession.

The time commitment can be fulfilled in either of two ways. Steady participation in the occupation for the full biennial round is one way to demonstrate a commitment to the profession, and periodical appearance at the major

events, in a working capacity, can achieve the same result. It is not, however, an occupation which requires a lifetime commitment from its members. In fact, as a group, it seems to take pride in its formerly active members who have made use of the skills developed and associations made in professional sailing to become successful in other occupations, whether associated with boats and sailing or not.

The group has its own heraldry which reflects both the group consciousness and the snobbery which exists within the group. One form of heraldry includes the tokens of membership in the I.B.N.A., the International Boat Niggers' Association. The crest of the I.B.N.A. shows a world map as a background to crossed oar and mop above the caption, "In Us They Trust". The association has no real functions and actually began as the Boat Niggers' Union in the bar of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club. The discussion took place the night before the start of the race to Ft. Lauderdale and revolved around the idea of striking for greater beer allowances during races.

Also a major aspect of the heraldry, and reflecting some of the snobbery, are the blazer patches which announce participation in the major races and the crew shirts from renowned boats. Of course, a combination of a series patch and a shirt from a boat which did well in that particular series is the height of this art form. Although these

emblems are often taken lightly, there is a serious side to the heraldry. The professional's job is to have the boat ready to participate in the selected races, and it is safe to generalize that any boat which does well in a series of races was completely ready. Thus, to have been the professional on a winning boat means that one has demonstrably done his job well.

Although there are serious requirements for membership, the I.B.N.A. does not function like the Civil Service. In fact, it more closely resembles a gentlemen's club in its policies regarding admission. Given a proper quorum and the right circumstances, membership can be refused on purely social grounds, and it can be granted to someone who is socially acceptable but meets few if any of the professional requirements. Even a few owners, such as Ted Turner, are accepted as members because of their attitudes and in spite of their occupational status. Turner owns the professional baseball and basketball franchises in Atlanta, Georgia, owns a television station there and is a renowned pioneer in cable television, but he is readily accepted at any group function. He is close to his crew and is often heard to say, "When the pros take a vacation, they come and sail with me." Jeff Foster, who is an old friend of mine as well as my employer on Anduril, is proud of the fact that he was one of the few owners to receive an invitation to the Quiet Little Drink when we were in Australia.

Another individual who sailed around the world more than once on a well-known boat and was a good friend of the professional, never became a member of the group. It was often said of him that he would have loved to be a boat nigger, but that he was born with an attic full of gold. He was a true Corinthian, and the fact that he never had to be paid to work on boats kept him outside the group. Financial independence is not always a sufficient reason for someone to be refused membership but it is true that most members depend on their weekly pay to live.

In understanding the self-consciousness of this group, it is imperative to realize that, while there are serious, professional codes involved, the overall function of the group is social and not particularly serious. It certainly does not function as a real trade union. The "association" does not act as a body, and it has no real effect on working conditions or pay. The reason for this is that most of the serious side of the occupation is carried on at sea, individually or in small groups, and the times when group solidarity manifests itself occur ashore, when the individuals are not actually engaged in the practice of their trade. Therefore, with the exception of the visible professional successes such as the winning of a race or the completion of a difficult delivery, most of what the group sees of each individual is his behavior ashore, and most

of what the group comes to know of each member's credentials comes from his own narratives of personal experiences and from those of his cohorts in occupational activities.

While personal experience narratives play an important part in reconciling the two sides of the occupation by giving details of the activities of each individual while he is separated from the group, they must also function within the lighter, shoreside social setting. More will be said on this subject in later chapters, but the important point here is that most group activities are social in nature and motivated by the need for entertainment. Sailors have always had a reputation for boisterous behavior ashore, and it is earned because when they are ashore they are not working. For this reason, nearly all group activities are forms of entertainment, and the visible character of the group is raucously carefree.

To describe the typical sailor involved in the European voyages of discovery of America, Samuel Eliot Morison cites Richard Braithwait's Whimzies, or New Cast of Characters (1631):

> He is an Otter, an Amphibium that lives both on Land and Water . . . His familiarity with death and danger, hath armed him with a kind of dissolute security against any encounter. The sea cannot roar more abroad, than he within, fire him but with liquor . . . In a Tempest you shall heare him pray, but so amethodically, as it argues that hee is seldom vers'd in that practice . . . He was never acquainted much

> with civilities; the Sea has taught him other Rhetoricke.[2]

Three hundred years have not done very much to change this description.

The first Whitbread Around the World Races were raced principally by survival experts from the military, but in the 1977 race, several boat niggers were sailing on King's Legend. Shortly before the start, they received the following telegram: "The world is flat, stop. I.B.N.A. Newport." Even a serious effort is likely to receive light-hearted treatment from the group.

In spite of the group self-consciousness, professional sailors have the ability to make fun of themselves. One former professional, now an executive with a boat building firm, felt that the heraldry was getting out of hand, so instead of replacing his old blazer patch each time he raced a new series, he simply sewed the new one over the old ones until his breast pocket was several inches deep. Also reflecting the same attitude is the crest of the Women's Auxiliary of the I.B.N.A. with its caption, "In Us They Thrust."

Boat niggers see themselves as a group. Although the group has serious professional and social codes, it is

---

[2]Samuel Eliot Morison, The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500 - 1600 (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 132.

secure enough in its definition to allow a relatively loose membership system and to be able to make fun of itself. In fact, most statements on the professional standards take the form of humorous stories about cases in which someone failed to live up to those standards. Being most often strangers or foreigners when ashore, the group holds tightly together when not at sea. The common greeting used when meeting another sailor in a strange place, "What's the matter, Boy, don't you have a home?" and the stock parting, "See you around the waterfront!" imply a sense of community which exists as soon as two members meet anywhere, and they imply a confidence in the perpetuation of this community.

INITIATION

Studies of initiation have traditionally focused on the ritual aspects of the process while ignoring the role that personal narratives play in that process.[3] One factor in a person's decision to even seek membership in a specific group must be that he has heard stories about that group, and that he has identified something in those stories that appeals to him. It may be circumstances described in narnatives which create the urge for membership, or it may be

---

[3] See Arnold van Gennep, The Rites of Passage, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Chaffee (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960) and Robert S. McCarl, Jr., "Smokejumper Initiation: Ritualized Communication in a Modern Occupation," Journal of American Folklore, 89 (1976), 49-66.

that the status afforded to the tellers of such stories appeals to him, but in either case, narratives have a role in creating interest.

Secondly, once interest is established, the person will very likely try repeating some of the stories to his peers to see if they cause the desired reaction. This may be seen as a commitment in principle to the occupation, even while his participation is strictly on a narrative level.

When he begins to participate in fact, he will begin to amass a repertoire of stories about the occupation which will begin to identify him with the group. When this repertoire, funded by experience, is large enough, he will be able to claim membership status, and a great deal is said in chapters five and six on the relationship between repertoire and membership.

There is a fourth level beyond the affirmation of membership in which narratives play a role in an occupation and its initiation processes. The teller of personal experience narratives concerning an occupation will be aware at certain times that he is performing for an audience which was previously unaware of or uninformed about the occupation. At such times he will be aware that he may be planting the same seeds in others which grew into his interest and eventually into his participation in the

occupation. Receiving membership status is enjoyable not only because one is treated as a peer by individuals he respects but also because he has a status to which others aspire. Furthermore, if he can create this aspiration and encourage its fulfillment, he can help ensure the longevity of the group of which he is an established member and thus ensure that his membership status will have meaning.

Most of the individuals recorded for this project had already received membership status, so there are not many discussions of how the process of initiation took place. The conversation with David Kellett, however, did include several stories of our beginnings in the occupation, and these appear in full in chapter four.

AN EXOTERIC PERSPECTIVE

As a group, professional sailors are predominantly white males, but even these characteristics are changing slowly. The only consistent, cohesive element is the occupation itself, and, in fact, it is characteristic of the group that it actively disregards those aspects which most often form the bases for folk groups. Since not all professional sailors who work on racing boats are considered to be boat niggers and because there are many who do not wish to be branded as such, the true cohesive element is the sharing of the attributes and attitudes described

by Braithwait above.

What really identifies the group is the fact that it so often acts as a group in its dealings with other people. There is no group standard in terms of age, religion, politics, education or national origin. Although most are not from wealthy backgrounds, they often have a short period of time to spend accumulated earnings and can live in a grand style for those periods.

Even the necessity for the use of technical jargon is generally overrated in the study of occupations. It is certainly used to confound outsiders, but I sailed with one skipper on a trans-Atlantic Race who used the word "whoop" to describe every item on board which might normally be given an esoteric name. When he used "whoop" as a verb, "gadget" was the attending noun, and the point is that, in the actual practice of the occupation, a good crew is familiar enough with the basic operations and does not rely on complicated jargon.

The group in question, then, is distinguishable from most people because they are sailors. They are different from most sailors because they make a living sailing, and they are distinct from other professional sailors because they work on racing sailboats. Furthermore, it includes only those who fit this description, are granted membership and who accept that membership.

We are dealing with a voluntary sub-group of professional racing sailors and those persons who, by regular association with the group and by general adherence to the norms of the group, move freely within it. After the next section which establishes my own status within the group and gives a diachronic view of membership, Chapter Three discusses the effect of the collector's membership status on his collecting and on his analysis of the collected materials.

OCCUPATIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

In lieu of a carefully chronicled list of sailing experiences I have had, I would like to present a brief list of the highlights and, more importantly, the significance of those events as they relate to my ability to collect among the group. In general, experience within the group not only allows one to identify obvious pseudo-members, but, more importantly, it also allows one to recognize the small actions which bespeak experience in others.

A clear example relates to the galley and cooking. Anyone who would claim group membership will have served as cook on a passage, either as the one, designated cook or as one of many serving in that capacity in rotation. I have done a great deal of cooking in the rotation system,

particularly on smaller boats where there was no room for an extra crew member to do the chores, and I have been the only cook on two Atlantic crossings, once as a professional. From this perspective, I know that experienced sailors eat what they are served without complaint, never make special requests for preparation or condiments, generally try to assist the cook with the serving of the meal while staying out of the cook's way and most often offer to do the washing up. While the cook is in the midst of a sophisticated juggling act, the inexperienced sailor will often point out that he has forgotton catsup for the eggs, will request another piece of toast and will leave his plate where he was sitting and leap for his bunk.

On a 1971 delivery to England on Yankee Girl, I remember thinking that when Joe Kennedy offered to help with the dishes on the second or third night out he was the only one of the six neophytes who would ever make a sailor, and after two weeks I had had no reason to alter that assessment.

Household chores usually fall to either the professional or to the youngest person on board, and I have been across the Atlantic in both situations. I had always been taught by my father and everyone else with whom I have sailed that cleanliness and keeping track of one's own gear are of paramount importance on a boat, where space is at a

premium. Briefly stated, the sloppy person gives himself away as inexperienced; while one may often see the experienced hand picking up after others and offering to do periodic cleanings of the head, the galley or other communal areas. This may reflect the absolute necessity for orderliness on deck which is ingrained in every sailor.

Appreciation of the responsibilities of command is a good way to judge if an individual has, himself, been in command off shore. One example should suffice. Sailing back from Europe with Horace Beck in 1970 on China Bird, conditions were such that we had reefed often when the wind speed increased to an uncomfortable level. One morning, Horace was occupied below, and James Osbourne and I revelled in the speed we were making as a result of increasing winds. We knew it was past reef-time, but we were childishly enjoying the speed. We reefed as soon as Horace poked his head on deck and saw the conditions.

A year later, I had my first command opportunity, taking China Bird down to the Caribbean. After a gale in the first two days of the passage, I required three days of perfect weather before I dared to put the mainsail back up at all.

I had learned that the experienced sailor first learns the captain's preferences on sailing the boat and then strives to keep him informed when changes in conditions

require that he act on those preferences. The inexperienced sailor will fail to communicate with the captain either because he does not understand the feelings of responsibility or because he thinks in his ignorance that he knows better than the skipper what is proper and prudent.

Having navigated four Atlantic crossings, six Bermuda races and a Sydney-Hobart Race, I am also aware of the courtesies that one should extend to the navigator. Reporting observations and otherwise showing interest in the navigator and his job are generally welcome, but meddling simply is not welcome.

The final significant aspect of my personal experience is that the international nature of the racing I have done has allowed me to see narratives and performers in a wide variety of contexts. Many Australians are professionals on American boats, for example, and being able to see their status as both performers and sailors in Australia allowed me to confirm conclusions made in other geographic areas. I was able to see whether certain individuals had rested on the laurels of their countrymen, and I could also see good, local performances succeed in greatly expanded contexts.

Appropriate behavior in the actual practice of the occupation is parallel to the use of appropriate materials and the appropriate delivery of those materials in the

narrative tradition which is the focus of this work. Experience in the narrative tradition itself may be gained through careful observation of the performance situations, but only experience at sea with an individual can give one a true picture of his ability as a seaman. Knowing group members and having sailed with them allows the collector to have a stronger understanding of the relationship between narrative ability and ability in the practice of the occupation.

In a purely generic study, it may be insignificant whether a good story teller is also a good sailor, logger or smuggler, but when part of the aim is to increase understanding of the occupation itself through the keys provided in a generic study, then the relationship between occupational ability and performance ability becomes critical. Actual experience in the occupation makes the identification of these keys easier in most cases, and in some cases, experience is the only thing that makes this identification possible.

CONCLUSION: OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

The conclusion here is quite simple. In my own eyes and in the eyes of the other professional sailors, I have qualified for membership in the group. I have sailed as a professional; I have sailed in the capacities of captain,

navigator, watch captain, cook and occasionally medic; I have participated in each of the three major international events; I have made ten crossings of the Atlantic; I have sailed on well known boats such as Ondine and American Eagle; I have sailed with and know the right people; and, I have attended most of the major ritual occasions of the group.

The next chapter will discuss the theoretical implications of group membership of the collector, but here I wish to establish firmly in the mind of the reader that this association with the group is a natural one which existed before any research and which continues to exist after the cessation of patterned collecting.

Having presented this occupational group from diachronic and synchronic viewpoints and having discussed esoteric and exoteric perspectives on membership, one now asks to what extent the personal experience narratives of the group reflect its self-conscious, esoteric definition as a group and to what extent these narratives may be used by ethnographers in the description and analysis of such an occupation. Before approaching these questions, I will present the theoretical basis from which such research may be conducted and the ways in which these considerations operated on this specific research project.

CHAPTER THREE - OF SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP

INTRODUCTION

Each folklorist who collects, classifies and analyzes traditional material has a definable relationship with the group whose folklore he is studying. Whether it serves his purposes and those of the discipline for him to be a completely detached observer or, to varying degrees, a participant in the performance of the lore and in the contexts in which it lives has no effect on the validity of his research as long as he records the material faithfully and the degree of his participation is clear to his readers.

In many cases, the strengthening of rapport changes the amount of the observer's participation, and he may feel from his perspective at the end of the project that all of his material was collected in an atmosphere of mutual respect, although that atmosphere may only have existed in the later stages of the relationship. This does not invalidate or even color the quality of the research, as long as the collector is aware that changes are taking place and as long as that awareness is reflected in the presentation of his material. The collector who was a member of the group in question before he began any systematic recording of its traditions has the advantage that his level of comprehension regarding the material will not change as

much during the course of that recording, but he must also make that position clear when he reports his findings. Simply stated, what the collector collects and how he interprets it are affected by his relationship with his informants, and it is his responsibility to explain and describe that relationship to his readers.

In the study of occupational lore, and particularly the lore of those occupations which isolate the participants when they are plying their trades, the relationship between the folklorist and the group becomes slightly more complex, because there is often a separation between the practice of the occupation and the contexts in which the lore is exchanged. The actual work is done in small groups, isolated even from the main body of the group, while narrative sessions generally occur when there is a larger assembly of group members and when they are not actually working. The folklorist must also define the extent of his participation in the occupation as well as the degree to which he participated in the narrative sessions. His level of participation in the actual work, quite separate from his involvement in exchanges of lore, determines his ability to comment on the relationship of the lore to the occupation.

The many possible perspectives on the folklore of a particular group all have something to contribute to the larger understanding of that group, but the extent of each

contribution depends on the ability of the individual folklorist to define his own perspective and to be perfectly candid about his own degree of membership in the group. With this in mind, there is no limit to the variety of topics which a folklorist may study, but there are some contributions to the discipline which he might be expected to make.

In his address to the first annual meeting of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada, Herbert Halpert stated, "We can and should study the folk cultures of all levels of society, not merely rural peasant cultures though these are often the most pleasing to our aesthetic sensibilities."[4] The aesthetic sensibilities of folklorists may be seen as a direct product of folklore's heritage in the "antiquities" of literature and in the disciplinary practices of anthropology. Whether fieldworkers have found their own cultures to be too humdrum to warrant study or have felt that the more unique and exotic the material the more impact their research will have, the fact remains that many feel the need to "go away" to do fieldwork. They feel that they must leave their own geographical areas or go outside their own levels of sophistication to find materials suitable for study.

---

[4] Herbert Halpert, "The Past is Prologue," Bulletin of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada, 1, No. 2 (1977), p. 6.

In fact, a folklorist's contribution will be greatest if he applies his particular methods and insight to a spectrum of cultures, and within this range there are some to which he can bring special talents either because of his proximity to a given group or his pre-existing esoteric knowledge about that group.

Halpert continues, "Frontiers in western Canada were so recent that often the original pioneers survive. Not to record these older traditions while they exist would be unforgivable. How can we study cultural change if we do not have a baseline from which to measure such change?" The message is clear. As a folklorist, one has a responsibility to all traditions, because folklorists are the ones who seek out tradition in its many manifestations. Whatever the individual folklorist's specialty within the discipline, it is his obligation to contribute to the "baseline" knowledge of the traditions of the region in which he lives and works.

There is a further obligation which all folklorists share and which goes beyond their professional abilities to recognize, collect, catalogue and analyze folk materials. Each is a member of identifiable folk groups and, as such, has special knowledge of those groups. This special knowledge should be combined with professional skills and applied to a research project. This is not to say that

folklorists are trapped by their own backgrounds and forced into research only on certain topics or among specific groups. It is rather to say that each folklorist is in a position to contribute to the "baseline" knowledge of a particular group for the simple reason that he is who he is.

Each collector should realize that he possesses a particular generic expertise and special knowledge of particular groups, and he should demand of himself that he combine these factors in research that will do groundwork in both the genre and the group. If, as Hamish Henderson says in his introductory remarks to Goldstein's fieldwork guide, ". . . the evening or Sunday collector can take comfort in the fact that much of the best collecting of the past has been done precisely by the part-time amateur - especially if he knows his own area well and has a real sympathy with its traditions,"[5] the trained folklorist with the same knowledge and sympathy should feel even more comfort.

These general statements apply as well to the study of occupational lore as they do to regional or ethnic studies, and in the case of occupational lore the collector's position of special knowledge may be of even more importance.

---

[5] Hamish Henderson, "Preface," in Kenneth S. Goldstein, A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore, Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, Vol. 52 (Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1964), pp. x-xi.

If he is not an initiate, the collector may not comprehend that there are levels of competence which exist within the occupation. He may, on the one hand, take at face value the statements of an informant who - while anxious to please and to establish his own identification with the group - is not highly regarded within the occupation. On the other hand, he may not give proper credence to the evidence of a true leader of the group, who may find basic questions below his station to answer or who may feel that his position is so unassailable that he need not contribute to it himself.

THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN FOLKLORIC REPORTING

I can remember through early school years being constrained to keep reports impersonal and to camouflage myself behind a third-person style. "One may perceive . . ." always replaced "I think . . ." because it sounded more authoritative. This style and the mode of thought behind it are counterproductive in the presentation of the results of folklore research, because the reader should know as much as possible about the collector to make the best use of his collection and to assess the conclusions drawn from it. Therefore, the collector has a responsibility to identify himself, to explain his relationship with the group and the subject material and to present examples of his own relevant repertoire.

The basic thrust of this chapter is that there are many valid and productive ways of relating to informants and their materials, but that each is only as valid and productive as the extent to which the collector explains the specifics of the relationship. Only if the collector identifies himself can readers ascertain whether or not there might be personal or social constraints on his collection. Many people today are too cautious when addressing the question of sexual stereotyping, for example, and ignore, because of personal attitudes about the topic, the fact that their informants may suffer from such sexist attitudes, and that this might prevent them from giving the same information to a female collector that they would to a male.

The collector must also be honest enough with himself to realize that there are materials that he will not elicit, and even if he cannot state such tendencies directly, he should at least show enough of himself that his readers will assume them. No reader of this thesis will leave it with the impression that I am squeamish about obscene materials, because of the materials I have presented from the group repertoire and from my own. Because of my informants' perception of me, I collected obscene material easily, but what is important is that the reader come to understand that the informants might have that perception of me. The same logic applies as well to the intricacies

of the occupation as it does to obscene material, except that I felt it necessary to be more direct in describing the means by which informants would form their perception of my involvement with the occupation.

Beyond personal and social considerations, there should also be sufficient cultural information about the collector to allow readers to assess the depth of his analysis of the collection. Just as his personal and social status can affect the materials he collects, his cultural background can affect the way in which he perceives the nuances of the material. If he uses the materials being considered in relevant contexts, he should not only be allowed to use himself as an informant but should also be required to do so for two reasons. First, his own examples add to the body of material preserved for future study. Since there is no fixed corpus of material, each example presented with proper context is of value to the baseline knowledge. Secondly, by citing examples which come to his own mind, the collector tells his readers more about himself, thus giving them more information to work with when evaluating his collection and his analysis. He may, in fact, tell his readers something that he does not expect to tell them but which is useful for them to know.

Dorson pays lip-service to this theory in his contribution to the Journal of the Folklore Institute's special

issue on the personal experience narrative,[6] but he then proceeds to recount two cute stories about himself with little or no meaningful commentary. The fact that he did contribute the article does, however, tell us two things about him which he may or may not have intended us to know. First, and rather overtly, he viewed himself as a comic figure, however condescendingly, and probably wanted others to have that view. Secondly, I think his contributing the article was his way of giving his blessing to the entire effort of the special issue.

The things we say about ourselves have overt and covert functions, of which we are more or less conscious at the time, but they also send messages of which we may not be aware at all. It is extremely important that at least some of these messages be sent if it is to be possible to assess the collector's role in a contextual study of folklore. The camouflage must be removed, and the collector cannot allow himself the luxury of anonymity nor can he assume that his readers know enough about him to make such an assessment.

Especially when a discipline has grown to the extent that the results of its members' research are used by other disciplines, it is imperative that it display its methods

---

[6]Richard M. Dorson, "The Legend of the Missing Pajamas and other Sad Sagas," Journal of the Folklore Institute, 14 (1977), 115-24.

and its personality clearly. For example, a linguist using a folklorist's tapes to analyze the speech patterns of a particular group should know how the folklorist approached the interview. If the latter presented himself as an "academic" with patches on the elbows of his tweed jacket and a sophisticated air, the informant may well have tried to speak in what to him was a more educated way, and this could disguise his normal vocabulary and syntax.

The appendix to this work presents a brief description of each of the interviews I conducted, including the physical setting, a brief description of the individuals involved and my assessment of the relationship among those individuals. It also includes a list of the narratives contained in each session. Its contents are intended to provide the additional context described above, so that the material cited in the text can be used with more confidence by other researchers, but because of its candor, it is not meant for republication of any kind.

A good proportion of the material in this work is from my own repertoire or from my recollection of the repertoires of others. Footnotes to these stories give as much information as possible about the history of the story as I know it. I have used myself in this fashion for several reasons. First, I consider myself to be a typical member of the group, with a representative repertoire. Secondly, many

of my own stories appear on the tapes because they were used to elicit stories from others. Thirdly, stories from my own repertoire are offered as part of the overt self-definition which I believe belongs in the analysis of folklore research, and finally, they are also offered as part of the covert presentation of self, from which others may draw conclusions which were not apparent to me or which, due to disciplinary constraints, were not within the scope of this work.

Having argued for the presentation of self in folkloric reporting, I will continue by discussing several ways in which a person's being who he is affects his collecting, and then I will discuss some of the specifics of my own fieldwork.

GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND THE COLLECTOR

Introduction

In dealing with personal experience narratives in an occupation, one must be aware that caution is necessary when using the narratives to provide a description of the occupation. They should not always be taken at face value because the storytellers may be using them for functions other than straight communication, and there are forces at work on the stories themselves which alter what is said and how it is presented. Only through the establishment

of rapport with the informants can one become aware of these nuances and begin to receive the real message of the narratives.

In the establishment of rapport and in the later analysis of the collected material, prior membership in the group can be a great advantage, but there are pitfalls. Principally, the collector can have too great an effect on what he collects, and since he has a personal interest in how the group is portrayed and how his role within the group appears, he may unwittingly alter his analysis to improve his own image and that of the group. This is the major reason why one should identify himself vis-à-vis the group when presenting his collection. It is not possible to be completely objective despite one's efforts, and the reader should have enough information at his disposal to ascertain how the presentation itself functions for the folklorist presenting it.

Rapport

In the establishment of rapport with specific informants, prior group membership is certainly a factor, if not always an advantage. Although the fact of membership makes it unnecessary for the collector to introduce himself to the group, his ongoing involvement in the occupation may have bred enmities, and he may be unaware

of these until a collecting situation develops. He may even come to find that his own standing within the occupation is not what he had assumed it to be. There will be members of the occupation from whom he will never be able to collect due to personal conflicts developed over the course of time, and these individuals are likely to be those who hold views different from the collector's. Thus, his material is likely to be from one perspective only.

There is a danger in any collecting situation of over-priming the pump and actually putting words in an informant's mouth, and this is particularly true when the informant is a friend who is trying to be helpful. This is further complicated by the introduction of collecting equipment, such as a tape recorder, because informants tend to try to polish their performance for the machine. These dangers exist, however, in all collecting, whether the rapport exists prior to the start of collecting or whether it develops over the course of the project.

In discussing rapport and the collector's perspective, one is aware that the fieldworker who is a group member will interview mostly his friends, but it is important that he is aware of this. In the normal progression of a collecting project, the collector will be led from informant to informant, and they are not likely to send him to other group members who have strongly opposing views,

so the non-member collector may finish with material just as one-sided as the member, and he may not even know it. The member collector will be aware of factions within the occupation and will, in fact, be able to institute controls on his research by testing hypotheses consciously within differing factions.

The member collector has a distinct advantage in the introduction of collecting paraphernalia and in the inducing of natural contexts. If he is engaged in the occupation, rather than visiting it, he will have an area in which he can control the physical surroundings. In this particular case, I was able to create a natural atmosphere by inviting an informant to my boat, where the tape recorder was already set up and complete with reliable power supply. It was not necessary in these situations to interrupt the flow of the interview to get and arrange the apparatus for recording.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that, as word of my project passed through the group, some people with whom I had never been close asked to be interviewed. From one point of view at least, this is not really surprising, since the group as a rule is sympathetic with attempts to any member to begin or to further a career outside of itself.

Prior group membership of the collector is, then, an advantage in the establishment of a working rapport as long

as the collector is aware of the special ramifications of his membership. He must be aware most of all that his friendship with certain individuals and his professional unanimity with them can lead him into a myopic position, but given that awareness, he may have a strong control over the course of his collecting, a control which is unattainable by the non-member.

Analysis of Materials

The member collector is at a great advantage when it comes to analyzing his collected materials. He will be able to go beyond the face value of statements made, understand both the denotation and the connotation of those statements and be able to project beyond the actual recorded or transcribed examples to conclusions which are solidly within the esoteric framework.

On the most basic level, the member collector will understand the jargon of the occupation, and this gives him several advantages. First, it will not be necessary for him to interrupt the course of an interview to ask repeatedly for definitions of specific terms or phrases. Secondly, he will be less likely than an outsider to miss the real point of a given narrative through a lack of understanding of the circumstances being described. Thirdly, names, places and situations will be familiar to

him, and the full context of the events in a narrative will be comprehensible to him.

At any given time within any occupation, there are specific methods, materials and individuals which have specific reputations. On this second level, the member collector also has an advantage over the uninitiated, because he will be aware of the connotations of these aspects of the occupation. A simple statement such as, "They do end-for-end jibes," might cause the non-member to ask for a clarification of the terms. Even when these were provided, he would be likely to miss the fact that the connotation of this statement is that those concerned are out of touch with the current methods of the occupation and the further implication that they are hopelessly incapable of ever becoming current.

On a final level, the member collector is in a position to use himself as an informant. There are clearly dangers inherent in this, but careful, self-conscious use of one's own store of material can be rewarding. In the same way that one may prime the pump by telling his own stories, he may also be aware of the fragmentary or variant nature of a particular story told to him. This is not to say that he should complete or correct the story as told, but it does put the collector in a position to ponder the reasons for deficiency and variation and to seek the answers in the remainder of the interview.

Knowing at the time that a story is a variant does not alter its intrinsic value, but it does serve as a key to the interviewer that there may be some hitherto unforeseen pressures on the informant. It may cause the collector to question if there might be something unnatural in the created context or if the informant may be seeking some further function from the interview.

Analysis of Context

Unless he can actually participate in an event which is totally native to the occupation, the collector of occupational lore may have some difficulty in recreating the contexts in which his material usually exists. Through careful questioning, he may be able to recreate most of the major aspects or elements of a typical performance situation, and since the performance milieux of isolation occupations such as trading posts or bars ashore, are generally accessible to any interested party, the description of performance contexts should not be difficult.

The contexts in which narratives are used as communicative media during the actual practice of the occupation present an entirely different problem for the collector. If he does not become involved in that practice, he will not be able to participate in these sessions, and he will be forced to rely on the memories and the descriptive abilities of his informants.

It is difficult not to overestimate these abilities in one's informants, because their competence with the data about the trade causes one to attribute to them competence with all things. In the first place, a particular informant may appear exoterically to be a full-fledged group member, but for whatever combination of reasons, he may not have participated in the kind of event the collector is seeking information about. Family ties, for example, may have earned him membership status from an exoteric point of view when this status has not been granted esoterically.

Secondly, even if a given informant is in fact a representative member of the group, he may not have the combined abilities in terms of memory and description to portray what he does know about the occupation accurately. It is particularly difficult to answer general questions about any topic, and the member collector is at least able to be specific in his questioning and to help his informants by suggesting specific areas on which they can comment.

If the collector is a member of the group, he should not have problems knowing whether a specific informant is a bona fide member of the group, and he should be in a good position to assist his informants in remembering and describing the details of the occupation, but for this very reason, the onus shifts to him. He must not assume

equivalent understanding on the part of his readers, and he must be careful to explain those nuances of a situation which are obvious to him and to his informants. A particular informant may be uncomfortable simply because of the actual context, and the collector may be aware of this through his own membership in the group, but he must be sure to reveal this kind of detail in his presentation of the material.

Analysis of Style, Content and Function

The basic advantages of collector membership have been presented, but there are some specific comments to be added regarding the analysis of style, content and function. Fundamentally, the collector who is also a group member is in a good position to judge the effect of the audience on these elements.

In directed interview situations, most informants were perfectly candid about the fact that they change the style and content of their stories out of respect for their audience, and the evidence of recorded sessions bears this out. In performance situations, however, the collector may not have the opportunity to ask direct questions of his informant about which elements of the audience brought about changes in the material. The problem is further complicated by the fact that the

audience at any performance is not generally a fixed or a definable quantity. More often it has a fluid consistency, and the individuals who have a controlling effect on the style and content of specific stories may move in and out of the physical context. Since the performers are aware of and affected by these comings and goings, the collector should also try to be aware of them, and the member collector will be in a better position than an uninitiated one to assess the ramifications of these changes in audience make-up.

The material performed may also change if the functional make-up of the audience changes. While he may alter his performance to suit his audience on some occasions, he may also be forced to change his functional goals in the performance due to changes in audience consistency. The most obvious example of this would be if a group member were pontificating on the occupation and his role in it to a group of non-members, and the group were joined by several other initiates. The narrator in such cases may be forced to cease aggrandizing his own position. In the light of this, the member collector should be aware that he may never see the ways in which some other members use their narratives when speaking to a group of non-members.

Several years ago, for example, my brother met a person who was telling stories about sailing on a

trans-Atlantic race with Horace Beck. Horace had told me that the most useful thing this individual had done on the entire race was to lose the basket from the coffee pot overboard in the first day of sailing, and when my brother mentioned that I sail with Horace, this fellow stopped telling his sea stories with embarrassing abruptness.

On a more esoteric level, the entrance of a specific individual may alter the performer's ability to have his performance function in the desired way. If he is telling another member's story in the first person and that individual enters the room, his goals will be thwarted. Whether the desired function of the performance was to enhance his reputation as a member of the occupation or as a storyteller, the result of that individual's entrance is the same, and the performer must either disguise the story, attribute it to its owner or simply stop the rendition. The uninitiated collector might easily confuse the reasons for apparent hesitancy on the part of the narrator and attribute it to faulty memory or poor performance, while the member collector should be in a position to analyze the effect of each specific component of the audience.

Time

The ramifications of prior group membership on the time factor are truly significant. One may, quite simply, spend the time available for the specific project on actual collecting, because he will not need to invest any time in the establishment of rapport. Furthermore, he will have the same insight into the material collected at any time during the fieldwork and will not depend on an increasing understanding to be able to perform meaningful analysis retroactively on his earlier collectanea.

Although it may be difficult to admit it theoretically, each collector must deal with the element of time in his work, and every one of us has felt frustration or even panic that the anticipated material is not forthcoming during the time allowed between semesters or within the time frame of a particular research grant or degree program. If working within groups in which he has prior membership can lessen the frustration and panic caused by time constraints, the collector will have more energies to apply to the problems of the research itself.

Collecting Contexts

There are some problems associated with membership which directly affect the folklorist's ability to collect in certain contexts, and one of these is that he cannot

have the luxury of detachment which an observer may claim. There are instances in which his role within the group absolutely prohibits his behaving as a collector. If he is standing a regular watch, for example, he cannot abandon his responsibilities on deck to participate in and record a storytelling session which is taking place down below. Even in the performance contexts, when he does not have specific, occupational duties, the member collector may be such an integral part of the performance that he cannot manipulate the recording devices or even find time for note taking.

In spite of this, group membership on the part of the collector does allow him access to and a certain degree of inconspicuousness in many collecting contexts. His attendance will be expected at most events, and since he would be there even if he were not collecting, his physical presence does not alter the performance. Therefore, he will be in a good position to record completely natural contexts, and since it is natural for any member to take a hand in the control of a session's direction, he will not have an untoward effect on the material performed.

There are in sailing many events which the non-member simply would never be able to witness firsthand. Since weight and space are extremely important in the modern

racing sailboat, there is no thought at all given to taking observers for any purpose, except on the very large "Maxi" boats. A collection based only on material from these boats would not give a representative picture of the group.

The greatest advantage which the member collector has in terms of contexts is that he may create a natural context in one-on-one situations. For amateur performers, the element of exchange is very important. In natural contexts, a particular story is brought to mind generally by something in a preceding story, and part of his reward for performing his own narratives is that he will hear stories from the other participants in return. This exchange concept is most clear in the collecting of music, where the musician collector can not only offer songs in return, but can also convince his informant that he will appreciate the subtleties in the latter's performance by displaying some in his own music. There is a satisfaction in knowing that the nuances in one's performances are appreciated, and the member collector can be the vehicle for this satisfaction where the non-member cannot.

The ability to perform the principal tasks of the occupation is not sufficient by itself to ensure membership, and the social habits of the group members in many ways determine performance contexts. I was told by Mike

Mitchell, who is a close friend as well as an established group member, that I would have to come back later if I wanted to hear stories of the previous night's activities: "Christ, I can't tell the story until we've had a few beers."[7] in the case of another interview, the interview itself became a part of the group's lore, because my informant and I drank three bottles of rum, talked all night and did not appear for work on our respective boats until after noon the following day.[8]

It is possible, therefore, that the member collector can attend natural events without making any change in the context itself, and he may, in fact, be a major component of that context. Furthermore, he may expect a certain degree of success in inducing natural contexts, as long as other conditions are right, but success in this direction is not guaranteed. While docked at the Miami Municipal Marina in the middle of the S.O.R.C. and after an evening spent with many other professionals, Chuck Wilson and I went back to Stampede with the express purpose of recording an interview. All of the elements of a good session seemed to be present: we had had plenty to drink; we were just in from a long race; we had just exchanged several stories with other friends; and, we were

---

[7] 77/12/1/370.

[8] Tapes 78/6 through 78/10 were recorded that evening.

both in the mood for a quiet chat. My tape recorder was ready to turn on, so there was no delay from setting it up, but as soon as we were settled in, we both realized that we had nothing to say. Two months later, Chuck visited me in Marblehead. Neither of us had raced in over two months, there were no boats in sight and yet the evening developed into a perfectly natural and productive narrative event.[9]

In the remainder of this chapter, I will describe the contexts in which I actually collected material on tape, and these descriptions will serve as a background for later discussions on context. I will also describe some of the contexts in which taping was not possible but in which material was recorded by other means.

SPECIFICS

Recorded Material

Of a total of twenty recorded contexts, six were the starts of races, seven others were on boats and seven were ashore, and of the total of thirty-three hours of taping, twenty-one were recorded in interview situations. Only two tapes were made in groups of more than ten persons, and on only one of these occasions (76-1) did a true performance situation develop. This is the case, because

---

[9] Tapes 78/19 through 78/21

the majority of taping was done in esoteric groups, and the disparity of experience necessary for performance was not generally present.

The start tapes are significant principally because of what they demonstrate about the appropriateness of narratives in certain situations within the occupation. In six hours of recording at starts, with a crew of ten in each case, there are only two stories, one pantomime and five references.[10] When compared with the twenty-seven stories and one reference in just an hour during breakfast on one of those races,[11] one can see that the intensity of the start situations is not conducive to narration.

Of the thirteen non-start contexts, only three were recorded in the morning, and one of these was cut short when Mitch said that he needed a few beers before telling any stories. Significantly, the other two were recorded on boats at sea, where the normal concept of time is disregarded. When we found ourselves stuck on the entrance sandbar in Clearwater, Florida, (77-1) it seemed perfectly normal to have cocktails and exchange stories as we watched the sunrise.

---

[10] See Chapter Four for a discussion of references as a form of narrative.

[11] 77/5/1 and 2/all. See Chapter Four, pp. 95 - 102 for a transcription of this session.

The two recordings of groups of over ten persons show a marked difference. In the first (78/13), a party on the docks moved aboard Stampede, the boat on which I was working and where I had my tape recorder prepared. The group was homogeneous, in that all present were working professionals, nobody took control of the narration, and the tape contains very little that is audible, much less of great use. The narrative portion of the party at the Pensacola Yacht Club (76/1) was tightly controlled, and the results form a basis for the discussion of performance in Chapter Six.

Each of the smaller group and interview situations recorded became an exchange of narratives, rather than a question and answer session, and informants' stories represent about sixty-seven percent to my own thirty-three. Although I had prepared a questionnaire and had it with me during all of the interviews, on only one occasion did I stay with it for more than a few minutes (78-1 and 78-2), and the informant in that interview could best be described as an aspiring boat rigger. In all other cases, the chain of narrative thought took control of the flow of the interview and presented the material in a more natural context than it would have had had the questionnaire been carefully followed. All of the questions were answered by example rather than by direct statement.

It is in this kind of interview results that one may best see the value of the collector's membership. Having the capability to generate a completely natural context for the purposes of recording it has inestimable value. The material actually recorded can be more selective and to the point from the beginning of the project than that collected by a non-member. Constant contact with one's informants and the winning of their respect from an occupational angle allows one to engage in the foreplay long before the interview begins in earnest.

Selective recording, while concise and economical, does put an extra burden on the collector's memory and on the other collecting techniques he uses. However, just as specific narratives will key others for group members, specific narrative contexts will remind the member collector of related contexts.

The most important reason to record narrative sessions is not to preserve the narratives themselves, although that is significant. The narratives continue to exist in most cases without the benefit of being recorded, and even the most minute details can be retained or lost and regained again through the processes of oral transmission. What is totally ephemeral in each individual narration is the contribution of those who are on the same performance team with the principal narrator, and these contributions

are more informative keys to the functioning of the narratives within the group than are the narratives themselves. The original tapes are on deposit in the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive and may be reviewed at the discretion of the Archivist.

Other Collecting Methods

Where tape recording freezes specific details of specific narrations, notes serve to give perspective outside the parameters of the actual tape. To this end I kept a regular journal, whose purpose was to record occasions on which taping was impossible and to expose functions of previously recorded material as those functions became clear.

It has been my custom to keep such a log on longer passages, because without it the memory of the particular trip tends to collect itself around a few, special events. I have also found, quite frankly, that my memory can be very subjective, and on several occasions my memory of an event has been substantially different from the event as recorded in my notes.

I carry an instant, idiot-proof camera with me, but it has never been an interesting hobby to me; and thus I have tended to forget its existence except in special contexts. On one trans-Atlantic trip, I shot one roll of film which consisted of one picture of leaving port and one of entering port at the other end, sandwiched around

eighteen pictures of the same sunset.

I rejected the idea of videotape for two reasons: one practical and one theoretical. In the first place, the gear is too bulky and yet too sensitive to exist for long on an ocean racer. Secondly, many of the narrative contexts are communicative rather than performance oriented, and the camera would have forced the narrators to perform where that would not have been their normal posture.

Printed Sources and Traditional Links

Although this study is concerned with the oral narrative tradition of a specific group, the question arises whether this group shares any traditions with professional sailors from different generations. The following chapter's section on content details not only what the sailors discuss in narrative sessions, but it also points out the attitudes expressed in these narratives about a variety of subjects, and it is the similarities in these attitudes which demonstrate the links between the recorded stories from this group and the sailors' stories from the past.

If the topic is foolish behavior, one prevailing attitude is scorn for the absolute nature of mathematics. Nantucket whaling captains were supplied with a medicine chest and a "symptom book" which gave numbered prescriptions for certain conditions.

> One day a sick sailor having developed the symptoms calling for number eleven, the captain found to his dismay that the bottle supposed to contain that number was empty. However, not to be stumped by a little thing like that, he administered equal parts of number six and number five to the amount of the dose directed for number eleven. The story has it that the man was pretty sick for a time, but that he finally pulled through, though whether owing to a strong constitution or to the captain's ingenuity, deponent sayeth not.[12]

The same attitude appears in the following story:

> He had sailed around the world, the way he puts it, somebody asked him one day, "How many times have you been around the world, Sven?" He said, "Well, fourteen times East to West, uh, West to East, six times East to West. Eight times," he said.[13]

Another parallel pair of stories about foolish behavior concern reaction to changing weather. A Maine story tells of the mate who thinks that the breeze is strengthening and suggests shortening sail. The captain replies, "The moon will scoff it off." By this he means that he does not foresee any squalls on a moonlight night. After a couple of interchanges like this, the foremast was carried away by a squall. The captain came on deck and asked what happened and the mate replied, "The moon scoffed it off."[14] Similarly:

---

[12] William F. Macy and Roland B. Hussey, The Nantucket Scrap Basket (Nantucket: The Inquirer and Mirror Press, 1916), pp. 13-14.

[13] 781638, John Scott

[14] Horace P. Beck, The Folklore of Maine (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1957), p. 192.

> I've got a story about Ike Manchester, goin' down on Ireland's, what the hell was the name of that boat, Pandora? An' ah, they got down there a way, an' Ireland called Ike up on deck an' said, "Ah, what do you think?" Ike said, "Mr. Ireland, either you take the spinnaker off or God will." Jesus Christ; with that, Kaboom! The whole frigging spinnaker went overboard, gone. So the next day it came around ahead, an' it was blowing pretty hard. Ireland said, "Ike, what are you thinking?" "Mr. Ireland, you'd better take that ginny off or God will." Wham! They put on another one. An' the next day Ike comes up and Ireland said, "Ike, what do you think about . . . Never mind!"[15]

Outrageous language and a fondness for liquor are certainly not new to sailors. A Nantucket Quaker whaling captain who was annoyed with a business associate called in his mate to do his cursing for him.[16] and in Casco Bay, Maine, they say that a cask of rum will convince the sailors to "vote and vote right".[17] Eighteen percent of the recorded stories are about outrageous behavior, often involving bad language and liquor.

The printed collections do not have very much to say about life on board. There are few stories about heads, food or seasickness, and the stories about women are generally told from the woman's perspective. This is not

---

[15] 781646, Horace Beck.

[16] Macy and Hussey, p. 29.

[17] Herbert G. Jones, The Isles of Casco Bay (Portland: Jones Book Shop, 1946), p. 100.

surprising, because none of the printed stories are told in the first person, but they do demonstrate the cavalier attitude of sailors and their women toward long periods of separation.[18] Even though most of the published stories concern married couples, some do express the idea that there may be more than one love in the sailor's life. A Cape Cod captain was pleased with his new wife, but since it was bad luck to change the name of a vessel, he considered changing her name to "Bulldog".[19] There are even a few stories of infidelity, including the Martha's Vineyard tale of a woman who gave birth to a baby although her husband had been at sea for more than a year. Her only comment was that "John has written me several times."[20]

A clear link between the oral narratives in circulation today and the published narratives of past generations may be seen in the standard story of the young crew member who is instructed to follow birds or a star in steering his course. When he gets off course, he explains that he either

---

[18]See Macy and Hussey, pp. 26-27.

[19]Jeremiah Digges, et. al., Cape Cod Pilot (Provincetown and New York: Modern Pilgrim Press and the Viking Press, 1937), p. 69.

[20]Joseph C. Allen, Tales and Trails of Martha's Vineyard (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1938), p. 66.

Found another star, followed the wrong birds or followed birds from the wrong town.[21] When I sailed with Frederick O'Brien in 1967, he told of his nephew who had gone astray by following a bright star which turned out to be a satellite.[22]

Stories of ingenuity and seamanship certainly have a place in the published collections, and this may be seen clearly in the Elijah Cobb cycle.[23] The story of "Skipper Ryder" going out and filling his boat while the other skippers are trying to decide whether it is safe to go out is very similar to David Kellett's story of heavy weather sailing, quoted in chapter four, in that both admire action and decisiveness as opposed to inaction and vacillation.[24]

To find exactly similar stories in the repertoires of today's professional sailors, who maintain the expensive toys of other men, and the whaling captains of New England, who were engaged in serious commerce, would be surprising. What one does find is a strong similarity in subject and even in tone, even though the published versions are well

---

[21] Beck, pp. 192-93; Botkin, New England, p. 117-18; and Digges, p. 206.

[22] From memory, Frederick S. O'Brien.

[23] Mary Rogers Bangs, Old Cape Cod; The Land, The Men, The Sea (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1920), pp. 221-25.

[24] Bangs, p. 168.

polished, either by many tellings or by the author as he prepared them for print, and they are at least at second hand.

What arises from the comparison of the personal experience narratives of a group which exists today with narratives about a group which does not exist any longer is more in the form of a question: can material which unquestionably functions within the traditional framework of an occupational group be considered "traditional narrative" if many of the stories themselves do not have a life beyond the lifetime of the participants in the actual events? Some of the stories do show some remarkable tenacity. For example, the story of following the satellite, which was told to me in 1967, has antecedents which were published in 1957, 1947 and 1937, respectively.

I believe that the answer lies in whether or not a story is irrevocably tied to specific times, places or individuals or whether it can shake off specifics and be repeated regardless of specifics. It does not matter whether the young sailor is told by a fishing captain or a yachtsman uncle to follow a star or birds. What matters is that the neophyte is not able to make any more than literal use of advice given to him by one with experience, and it is this situation which is traditional. Comparison with sailors' stories from past collections shows that the

recorded collection in question here shares the situations and character traits with them. Whether a specific story leaps to mind or must be dredged from memory in response to a specific question or other stimulus, it still functions equally with others as the tools of the tradition of the group, those things which contribute to the definition of that group, and as such they are traditional narratives.

Other printed sources which were not systematically searched for this project certainly exist, as each yacht club encourages narrative accounts from its membership and publishes these in more or less sophisticated formats. Yachting magazines also publish everything from notes about cruises to histories of certain events or ships. The classification and analysis of these materials is an entirely separate project but one which may well shed more light on the use of narratives about personal experience within an occupational group.

CONCLUSIONS

The message here is really quite simple and straightforward. Each folklorist is a member of many groups which share esoteric traditions, and as one who is sensitive to the workings of tradition and is able to identify those things which are traditional within these groups, he should consider it an obligation to the discipline that he

contribute to the baseline knowledge of folklore by collecting, classifying and analyzing the lore of these groups from his esoteric viewpoint. Beyond this, it is also imperative that the folklorist identify himself to the extent that those using his collections and reading his analyses of them are able to see what effects the individuality of the collector may have had on what was collected. It is not always easy or pleasant to hold oneself up to such scrutiny, but such a self-portrait is necessary if others are to be able to understand the meaning of a specific collection. No one individual can expect to collect everything concerning any topic, so he must make it clear why and how he did collect the information he did obtain.

These comments are especially appropriate when discussing personal experience narratives. A teller of a personal narrative participates in the event which later becomes a narrative. He may then see it operate in traditional ways within the group, and he may even see it take a place among the larger body of traditional narrative. Only if reports of events are recorded at this stage of their lives can we actually establish their traditional nature in future research. If we are able to chart such progressions, we may be more able to evaluate previously collected material and to speak with authority on the larger patterns of traditional lore.

CHAPTER FOUR - FORM AND CONTENT OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language definition of "narrative", "A story or description of actual or fictional events; . .", leads one directly to "story": "The narrating or relating of an event or series of events, either true or fictitious. 2. A prose or verse narrative, usually fictional, intended to interest or amuse the hearer or reader; a tale." There are enough loaded words in these definitions to send a folklorist reeling, but "personal experience" differentiates these narratives from those which require a suspension of reality, such as folktale and myth, just as "narrative" itself separates them from all of the non-narrative forms. We are dealing, then, with believed stories or descriptions of actual events, and the closest generic relatives are jokes and legends. This relationship will be discussed later in this chapter, and the problem of how personal a personal experience must be will be treated in Chapter Five, but first I will describe the material in terms of form and contents.

FORM

Within the context of an occupational group, there is no question that personal experience narratives are shared,

as they are shared in any folk group. Once any story becomes part of the group's lore, it may appear in any one of four distinct forms, as a reference, a fragment, a whole narrative with its versions and variants or as part of a cycle.

The reference relies most heavily on the shared narrative pool of the group, and it can draw equally from personal experiences or from jokes. For example, on a race from Miami to Nassau in the Bahamas, we encountered heavy following winds. At first we put up conservative sails and were making good speed, but the owner decided he wanted to take the risk of more sail and ordered the spinnaker to be set. The spinnaker is a balloon sail which, although adding greatly to the speed of the boat, can decrease control. I was off watch but not sleeping when the spinnaker was set, and for a few minutes everything seemed still to be in control. Very soon, however, the boat took several violent lurches and spun out of control. The sail had wrapped in the rigging, and one of my friends came below to get the gear necessary to solve the problem thus created. His only words to me were, "Holy stick!" A joke which was current at the time told of the man who walked into a liquor store with a mask over his face. He reached in his pocket and pulled out a wooden coat-hanger and said, "Holy stick! It's a fuck-up!" Steve's quick reference to

the joke told me all I needed to know about the state of affairs on deck, and I put on foul weather gear and went to help.

The reference is similar to the gnomic forms of folklore for two reasons: First, single words or phrases take on added meaning because of a shared knowledge within the group; and, secondly, they can instruct, chide or malign simply by their placement in a particular context.[25] The concept of added meaning should be clear in all of the examples, but two examples from the following joke show how the context alters the message:

> A French-Canadian fellow was in a bar complaining to one of his friends: O, mon ami, I have built the tallest building in all of Montreal, 27 étages, all glass and steel. And do they call me "Jacques, the building-builder"? No. and I build a magnifique highway from Montreal à Toronto, eight lanes, beautiful bridges, bushes, shrubbery. And do they call me "Jacques, the highway builder"? Non. And I build a bridge, a magnifique pont across the St. Laurent which solves all of the traffic problems in Montreal. And do they call me "Jacques, the bridge builder"? Non. But suck one little cock![26]

---

[25] For further discussion of references or short expressions in folklore, see L[awrence] G. Small, "Traditional Expressions in a Newfoundland Community: Genre Change and Functional Variability," Lore and Language, 2, No. 3 (1975), pp. 15-18.

[26] From Memory. This and other material attributed to memory are not in my taped material in the form cited, nor, to my knowledge do they appear in any printed source. When pertinent contextual information about the item does not appear in the text or in the story itself, it is supplied in the notes.

The first time I heard this story I was riding in a car with my father and stepmother, shortly after they had moved to Friday Harbor, Washington. A car went by, and my stepmother asked, "Isn't that Fred?" My father replied, "That Bridge Builder." He then told me the joke to explain his reference.

During the southern Ocean Racing Circuit in 1977, we raced with a crew of ten. Six of us made every race, and six others alternated in the other four spots, so we had a fairly cohesive group of twelve involved. The story of "Jacques the bridge builder" was certainly in the group's repertoire and was told and referred to often. One particular instance at the start of the race to Ft. Lauderdale exemplifies the story's life within the group. Dave Kellett was being picked on by everyone for some unimportant reason, but it was a fairly steady barrage of insults. He finally looked away toward the horizon and sighed, "But suck one little cock."

Where my father's reference had focused on the specific aspect of Jacques' sexual preference, Kellett's reference calls on the entire tone of Jacques' monologue, his feeling of being completely misunderstood. There is, then, an actual element of style in the use of references. Reading the context and appreciating that the reference's use will be in keeping with the speech economy demanded by

that context are actually topics for Chapter Six, but the point here is that there is no one single reference which accompanies a story. It would make an interesting study, however, to see which elements are appropriate as references. It may prove that the characteristics of the punch line, its terseness and its function of turning around the thread of the preceding story, are what make it particularly apt as a reference.

Thus far the examples of references have come from jokes, and the relationship between jokes and personal experience narratives will be examined later in this chapter, but now let us discuss the references generated by two personal experience narratives. The following is my own story, and was part of the repertoire of that Southern Circuit crew. It has also remained an active part of my repertoire:

> When we were in the Azores with Molly II, it was August, and the middle of the day was so hot that we couldn't work on the boat. So, every afternoon we'd get three or four bottles of Pico wine - Pico's a neighboring island with great vineyards - and go to the beach. A bottle of wine was about a buck, and about forty cents of that was the deposit on the bottle.
>
> One day we were sitting there, and this kid came up. He was no more than about six years old. He started pointing at the two or three empty bottles and then to himself, indicating that we should give him the empties so he could collect the deposits. Since we didn't have a whole lot of money with us, and we were still

> sober enough to realize that two and a half empties equalled a full, I waved him away. He stood right in front of us, looked us straight in the eye, spread his feet apart, grabbed his nuts and said, "Touriste!"[27]

It was certainly one of the best statements I have ever seen of total contempt. In his eyes we were total boors and probably did not have the wit ever to be anything else Tourists, of course, are despised everywhere and are tolerated only because of the money they spend. When we proved useless even in that respect, we were totally useless.

The single thing which makes tourists despised wherever they go is their lack of knowledge of the esoteric aspects of the area in which they are touring. They constantly break the customs of the group they enter, so the scorn which accompanies the word, "tourist", is a very deep scorn.

About ten minutes after the start of the 1977 St. Petersburg to Ft. Lauderdale Race, we were ahead of our class, and spirits were high. When the photographer's helicopter came by, Roger Grimes asked Kellett, "Are you smiling for the camera?" Kellett's reply was to face the helicopter, assume the same position as the little Azorian boy and shout, "Touriste!"[28] The implication was that we were not only in the racing group and leading but also that

---

[27] From memory.

[28] From memory.

we did not need the photographer because our glory would come from our race performance. As it turned out, we did very badly in the race, and we became April in the photographer's very expensive calendar because of the picture he took just at that moment, albeit with Kellett's gesture unrecorded.

The same reference was used by the crew throughout the series any time somebody did or said anything stupid or out of place. In fact, the word and gesture became so well used that it became a form of greeting among the crew even when the context of the original situation did not exist.

Another story which generated such a reference occurred several years earlier but also became part of the working vocabulary of the group.

> We were in Lisbon on American Eagle and had been there a couple of weeks when Adele came in. The people on board were friends of mine, so I was watching with some interest from the dock as they nosed into the dock. The yacht harbors in Lisbon are two little square basins cut out of the stonework at the sides of the river. This has two effects: first, they collect all the debris and flotsam from the river the way a strainer does in a swimming pool. Most of what is caught demonstrates that not all good, Catholic Portuguese follow the Pope's edicts on birth control or that the few Protestant Portuguese have an unbelievable sex life. Secondly, the swirls of current in these basins force all the boats to tie bow and stern. This means that the harbor is entirely crisscrossed with lines, some of which are invisible below the surface of the water.

> As Adele came in, a little Portugese on the dock was waving them in, yelling, "No problemo!" Taking his word for it, they proceeded into the catscradle of dock lines, and almost immediately got a line fouled in their propeller. Their first reaction was to try to push the line away from the propeller with the boat hook, but when they looked at the little man who had waved them in, he was literally dancing up and down on the dock yelling, "No possible. Necessario swim!"
>
> This time he was right, and the look on Bullard's face as he prepared to jump into the scum was anything but charitable.[29]

Two references to this story became part of the working repertoire on American Eagle, and as I have told the story, the usage has spread. "No problemo" has become the way to express that one thinks that someone else should go ahead and try something. It also carries the connotation that the person giving the advice has doubts if not absolute knowledge that the project will fail. In fact, it is now almost synonymous with a sarcastic "Sure thing", meaning that there is no hope whatever of success.

The two references very often appear together like "either . . . or" and "not only . . . but also". "No problemo" comes at the start of the project, and "No possible. Necessario swim!" comes when the effort proves useless. In the actual usage, "No possible" and "Necessario swim!" are interchangeable, and in most cases where they exist together, they are spoken by separate

---

[29] From memory

individuals. One states the futility, "No possible," while the other states the obvious, if unpleasant, solution, "Necessario swim!" The latter phrase also appears alone on many occasions, indicating that a totally new approach is necessary to solve the problem at hand.

When a reference like this becomes so much a part of the working vocabulary of a group, it can be used in ways that really have no relationship to the original situation. Meals on modern ocean racing boats are not the candle-lit, formal affairs that are so often pictured in books about the sea. In the first place, tables are long gone because they weigh too much and take up too much space. The typical meal, therefore, finds half the crew sitting on the floor of the cabin (the "cabin sole"), balancing plates on their knees and elbowing each other. The serving and eating of a meal takes a great deal of cooperation from all involved.

During a breakfast on the Ft. Lauderdale Race, one of the crew asked Kellett to hold his plate while he changed position to be able to eat. Kellett's response was, "No problemo."[30] In this context, the rough translation of the phrase is, "In a spirit of cooperation, I'll do what

---

[30] 77/5/1/95. See pp. 95-102 for a transcription of this session, and especially p. 96 for this item in context.

I can, but I think you may have asked me to do the impossible."

The reference is the shortest form of the personal experience narrative. It exists within a group because it serves a purpose of expressing longer thoughts with a minimum of words. Certain references gain this status within a group for three reasons. The first is that the original story is well accepted and becomes common property of the group. Secondly, there is something individual enough about the reference that the reference is clearly to that particular story, which is probably the reason why many references are foreign words not in usage otherwise. Thirdly, a given reference must prove functional within the group to have any durability.

The next form of the personal experience narrative is the fragment. Fragments come into being for one of two reasons: 1) either the teller never heard the whole story, or he has simply forgotten it; or, 2) the context does not allow for the telling of the entire story but a fragment of it has something to add to the storytelling session. They continue to exist in the tradition also for two reasons: by telling a fragment of a story, one sometimes hopes to hear more of the story from another storyteller; and, on some occasions, single elements of a story are too appropriate to be ignored. Two or more storytellers may

exchange several fragments of a story in an attempt to weave a single narrative out of them.

One of the more renowned storytellers in the ocean sailing group is Lenny Burke, also known as Lenny Berserk, Have-a-chat or Hava. The nicknames come very simply from his willingness and ability to exchange stories. Lenny sailed with me back from Nassau after the end of the Southern Circuit in 1977. We were headed for Ft. Lauderdale, and the other two crew members were Roger Grimes, from the racing crew, and his wife Allie. Roger is also known as a storyteller, and Allie often says that she has heard all of his stories "a thousand times". I also have a reputation as a storyteller, and to solidify the situation, Lenny and Grimesy were aware that I was studying stories. Thus what occurred was an exchange of information or a professional "skull session" rather than a storytelling session.

More will be said about this session in Chapter Six, but what is salient in this discussion is the course of the conversation among three good storytellers and a self-professed "shill". It moved from a normal exchange of stories, to an exchange of episodes from a cycle of stories about a single individual, to the sharing of the known fragments about an incident, to two fairly polished cycles of stories about two famous birthday parties.

A question to keep in mind during the following discussion about fragments is whether they can only exist in such circumstances and among a group whose members recognize that they are fragments of a larger body of story. They are fragmentary not only in form, but there is also a stylistic aspect by which the teller shows the story to be a fragment by admitting his lack of firsthand knowledge about all of the details. Again the question: is this style reserved for specialized contexts such as this?

LB: You know the nude wedding with Dick Kesslar?
JS: Oh . . . yes. That was in Jamaica, wasn't it?
LB: Somewhere . . . I . . .
JS: Well, we had one in Jamaica. Oh shit, I was there.
LB: There was some Australian guy . . .
JS: Well, McKenzie performed the service as I remember . . .
LB: He was the priest . . .
JS: Cause he is a minister, you know . . .
LB: . . . and Haskell . . .
JS: Ya, McKenzie. He sent away to one of these fuckin' . . . write away and become a minister things. He figured, ya know, "I may have to perform a burial at sea some day" . . . so he's now the Reverend McKenzie.
LB: Butterworth told me, Grimesy, you can write to these people and be ordained as a minister and there's half of them have never had the proper training, gone to the proper schools and that. They're using it as a tax dodge.
JS: That's right. Somewhere in Pennsylvania I heard about the news: Half the fuckin' town, they're all clergy so they don't pay real estate taxes.
AG: Maybe you should do that when we get back (to Australia), Mate (to Roger).
JS: I don't know, Allie, that might be stretching it a bit.
RG: . . . much better than "Mr Grimes".[31]

---

[31] 77/11/1/640.

Several stories of nude weddings are in the tradition of the group for the simple reason that the stunt has been performed on several occasions. The one I attended in Jamaica took place when we had chartered two buses and driven up into the hills with several barrels of punch. What is interesting is that, while everybody was nude and Sandy McKenzie did perform the wedding, there really was not very much more to that part of the story.

What also confuses the issue in this case is that there was a joke in circulation at the time about a nude wedding. With the Bride, the Groom, the Minister and the congregation all nude, the Minister asked the Bride, "Do you take this man . . ." and she interrupted, "No, I think I'll take that man over there."[32]

It is clear from the above that, although we each had heard of or attended nude weddings, we were not able to exchange enough information to be of use in each other's repertoires, and the topic faded. The previous exchange, however, had been more useful:

JS: He's the one who drove that car into the water in Nassau.
LB: That was Dennis Miller's car wasn't it?
JS: I think it was John Potter's.
LB: Oh.
JS: Young John, not Jack's.

---

[32] From memory as told by Jeff Foster, who is described in some detail elsewhere.

LB: This guy in Charleston who runs the . . . um . . . ship's chandlery in the Municipal Marina has got a white Hillman, English car. He found the car in the water with this guy standing on the roof, just about to dive in. Then they opened the door and the thing sank didn't it?

JS: I heard it was a Toyota, but I agree with the rest of it. He opened the window and crawled out on the roof. He was goin' to dive off when they opened the door and the thing went down like a ton of bricks.

LB: There was a big stink about who sank the car and everything.[33]

Clearly in this case, we are talking about two separate incidents. The finale to the story I know from Nassau was that the person who had rented the car called the rental company and complained that his car would not start. At the time of the call, the car was up to its roof in the water. Lenny's incident is probably from Charleston, since he identifies the car and the owner. His story now includes climbing out the window to dive from the top of the car. Mine now includes the dive. What we are in fact doing in this session is honing and polishing motifs by exchanging fragments.

As presented from this tape, the fragments would not exist alone in a storytelling session, but given another circumstance where someone tells the full story of either of these incidents, leaving out the dive, it would be perfectly within the tradition for someone else to add that

---

[33] 77/11/1/659.

element in the fragmentary form to round out the narrative. The fragment can exist in this form when there is an implied knowledge of the circumstances of the incident. Very rarely is there contradiction or real competition in storytelling sessions, but augmentation is certainly acceptable. As the audience is reacting to the story as told originally, a second teller might add, "Not only that, but when the Police arrived he was diving from the roof."

Even without an attempt at true narration, these fragments are socially interesting because of the extent to which they demonstrate the group's disdain for normal behavior.[34] In fact, most of Labov's criteria for a fully-developed story are present. "He's the one who drove the car into the water in Nassau." is the abstract. This is followed by two separate sets of orientation and complication. The evaluation exists in the acceptance without comment of this kind of behavior, and the coda is the simple statement that there was a "big stink".[35] There is no resolution, and as Robinson points out, "As

---

[34] See Livia Polanyi, "So What's the Point?" Semiotica, 25 (1979), 207041, for a discussion of the distinctions among culturally, socially and personally interesting topics.

[35] William Labov, "The Transformation of Experience in Narrative," in his Language in the Inner City, (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), pp. 354-96. In this article, Labov added "abstract" to his existing five components of fully-developed narrative.

there is no story without a plot, we may readily accept the claim that complication and resolution are obligatory features of narratives."[36]

Gillian Bennett suggests the useful term, "group sagas", for narratives exchanged in this form but does not see them as being on the structural continuum suggested here.[37] I would like to see the differences in the structure of one of the "group sagas" if one or more of Bennett's informants were to tell it ouside of the group described. The "Touriste" story, described above, shows that a narrative can exist in the tradition of the group as a single word and as a fully-developed story, depending on the homogeneity of the group.

The fragment, then, exists not only as a form of communication among storytellers, but also in performance situations as a stylized augmentation to the story being performed. The matter of augmentation will be discussed in Chapter Six, because it includes not only fragments but also spontaneous additions, and the sanctity of the text itself is attacked by stylistic considerations.

---

[36] John A. Robinson, "Personal Narratives Reconsidered," Journal of American Folklore, 94 (1981), 74.

[37] Gillian Bennett, "'Rocky the Police Dog' and Other Tales: Traditional Narrative in an Occupational Corpus," Lore and Language, 3, No. 8 (January, 1983), pp. 1-19.

There has been a great deal written recently on what comprises a single narrative. Robinson describes a spectrum from "minimum", through "complete" to "fully developed".[38] For the purposes of this study, however, let us say that a single narrative is the relating of an episode in such a way that it may stand alone within a series of unrelated episodes and that it may be isolated from a series of related episodes. There is a great temptation to look for larger structures or forms for the personal experience narrative, because in actual usage stories with common subject matter or characters certainly tend to cluster. As Thompson states about the Schwank, "There is a tendency for jests to form cycles," but ". . . frenquently detach themselves from cycles and may be encountered in the most unlikely places."[39] To stand alone, a story must have its own complicating action and resolution, and a useful way to isolate a story from a series of related episodes is to employ Labov and Waletzky's concept of "temporal junctures".[40]

---

[38] Robinson, pp. 73-77.

[39] Stith Thompson, The Folktale (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1946), p. 10.

[40] See William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience," in Essays on the Visual and Verbal Arts, ed. June Helm (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1967), pp. 12-44.

It would be very easy and almost unavoidable to organize a collection of narratives about a particular person or subject in such a way that they seem to weave a continuous and coherent narrative, but this kind of organization does not have the opportunity to occur within the contexts in which the personal experience narrative lives. Cycles, then, are unavoidable, but they should not be construed to represent larger forms for the narratives.

Any argument for larger structures than the single narrative would have to show that a given episode was always accompanied by certain others, even in a shuffled order, but this is simply not the case because of the contextual keys for the telling of the stories. During the session in which Lenny Burke and I were exchanging fragments,[41] seven consecutive stories dealt with the same individual. Of these seven stories, only two are identifiably in chronological order: the story of his wedding comes before the story of his divorce. I have encountered each of these stories apart from the others, but what is most telling in this case is the ease with which the topic changed. I told the story of a particular trip with this individual, in which I mentioned another person. Lenny

---

[41] 77/11/1/all.

carried on with another story about that second person, and the first individual was not mentioned again.[42]

The relationship among references, fragments, single narratives and cycles is certainly a complex one, and to understand it one must see each form in its true context. The following not only sheds light on the relationship among the forms, but will also be useful in later discussions about context and style.[43]

DK: In Australia you didn't use the head (toilet). That was the thing that used to kill me. Fuckin' hanging off the end of the boat. . . fuck that! You just hung off the side of the boat.
JS: The old Ondine was beautiful for that, was perfect for that because they had the weight holes cut out of the stern pulpit, the bumpkin, so you'd hop out there, you could pick the right hole for your ass size.
DK: (You could stay out there forever.)
JS: Charlie's brother, George, used to, had a, had a roll of toilet paper on the life-lines up forward in the tradewinds. He'd just go up there, have himself a little growl, read for a while . . .
JF: That's a little extreme, it seems to me. Ya know, there are a few comforts in this world. One of them is taking a shit.
JS: In the privacy of a carefully enclosed head. [Laughter]
JF: Which cost exactly twenty-six dollars. [Laughter] . . . one of the largest turkeys I have met in a long time.
DK: What ever possessed you to invite him for a sail?

[42] 77/11/1/520

[43] See Chapter Six, pp. 255-81.

JS: Ya know, I figured we might get the crapper door for nothing. [Laughter]
DK: Well, we successfully two-stepped the sail; anyway.
JS: An' he did offer me ah . . . offer me some dope.
DK: Doesn't make him a bad person.
JS: No.
JF: Still an asshole, but . . .
DK: He'd come up and say, "What time you going out today?", and if we were going out at ten, you'd tell him four.
JS: Actually, I invited him because, what was it, Tuesday, there were only three of us here, four of us here. I thought we might be able to use him.
DK: No problemo, Mate. [Trying to move for another crew member to get by.]
[After some muddled conversation which accompanies a changing of the watches, JS is offered more breakfast.]
JS: No thanks, Walter, I'd hate to get fat.
DK: Scotty, too late.
JS: From you, Kellett, I take that as a compliment. Since you have obviously decided to go the same route.
JS: It's gonna be quiet down here for a while, isn't it?
JF: This bunk is not the greatest, but it's not bad.
JS: I put some life preservers under it, kind of wedge it up.
JF: This fuckin' lee cloth is useless.
JS: What you probably need is a lee board.
JS: I keep worrying about Grimesy. He keeps telling us stories about people who didn't feed him enough.
[Muddled conversation about some of the boat's systems] . . .
JF: I've never gotten the salt water pump to work. I pumped it for about ten minutes one day.
JS: Built with pride by the men of Goetz.
JF: Did you show Eric (Goetz) the drain . . . drain plug that his custom engineers made?
JS: No, I spared him that. He was getting enough shit anyway.
DK: He said to me . . . yesterday if he could take a check back with him. I didn't have the heart to say "No".

JS: You know what I did to him this morning?
DK: (What, yesterday morning?)
JS: When Equation was going out. I was up fending off and pushing against one of the stantions. Derektor was pushing on the pulpit. Eric was standing right behind me; I said, "Jesus, Bob, I'm glad you put these stantions on and not Eric." Derektor said, "Ya know, Eric, I've been building boats for thirty-five years, and it doesn't get any better." [Laughter]. [For about five minutes at the actual change of the watch, JS has the Radio Direction Finder on, and this overpowers any conversation on the tape. Coherent tape resumes after the other watch is below.].
SH: Do you want a winch handle to . . . ah . . . get it down with, Grimes?
JF: Mush it around a little bit.
SH: To beat it apart.
WR: I've got a potato masher here.
DK: That explains why you did such a great job on the mashed potatoes . . .
JS: They used to call them (pieces of unflushable fecal material) "Blivets" on Ondine. One time Rick DuMoulin went up, they had a coat hanger for wedging it down the head. One time Rick DuMoulin came up, he'd gotten a fresh coat hanger and chewed up a caramel and stuck it on the end of the coat hanger. He came up on deck an' he said, "Jesus, I finally got that one! an' ate it off the end. [Laughter]
SH: You coming or going, Kellett?
DK: I've just come. I'd still leave the curtain there for a few minutes.
JS: The sad thing is that curtain used to be white.
DK: Now, now, Boys.
JS: Hey, your eyes aren't brown anymore.
DK: . . . try old Maxon. Tell Haarstick the story on that one.
JF: Well, we were on the Bermuda Race and, a, I was on the wheel, and the watch is up with me. And there's no wind an' we're all sort o' leeward rail, drive, drive, drive. Suddenly, the whole on deck watch shifts to weather. An' I say, "What the hell's goin' on?" Then I just catch this sort of odor

coming out of the hatch, So I immediately climb up to the weather rail, an' steer with my foot. Then down below I see all four guys, in unison, roll an' arrgh, they don't wake up they just arrgh. Maxon's takin' a shit. With the door closed. Groans from down below, an' . . .

SH: Don't you have any aerosol . . . ?

JF: What, growler bomb.

JS: No, I'd rather have the shit.

SH: Something to spray him with while he's in there?

JF: Beat the green cloud back.

JF: Did you have a pleasant morning, R. Underwood (Grimes)?

RG: Yah.

DK: You're full of shit.

RG: What?

DK: You're full of shit.

JF: What's the best food story Grimesy? Food at sea.

JF: [after a short pause]: He doesn't have a good food story.

RG: [inaudible].

JF: What? [in a shocked tone].

RG: . . . we had a bird cooking on board. I was just havin' a look down the hatch, an' she's stirrin' a fuckin' pot of fuckin' sterno . . . I just looked down the hatch for something, an' I look down an' here she is fuckin' stirrin' away an' she's got a bucket an' she goes, "Blaaa!" (throws up) I said, "For Christ's sake, you get that in the right fuckin' bowl." She was a tough kid, that one.

JS: Yah, obviously.

RG: By the time we got to St. Malo, to Dinard, she was so fuckin' weak, I fucked her right in the dockyard. [Laughter] Then I drank a fuckin' bottle o' gin.

JS: We always keep getting back to the same theme.

RG: Racing with Dennis Miller, I had this little chick on board, one of the guys' girlfriend, cooking. An' they stuffed 'er up in the fuckin' forepeak to sleep, ya know, in amongst the forty-five fuckin' gallons of water and fuckin' wet sails. Dennis being the gentleman that he is, he said, "Now darlin', it's no good to sleep up . . . terribly wet. The only dry place on this boat is my bunk . . . He was

just about to fuckin' slip it into 'er, when the fuckin' mast went over the side. [Laughter] Out the fuckin' hatch with this great stiff fuckin' cock, an' the first lad he spies is the bird's boyfriend. He's on the fuckin' wheel, an' here he is with this great fuckin' horn. He said, "That timing was just right. I was just about to get it in, an' Bang, crash . . ."

JS: Reminds me of the quarter berth on the way to Cape May. That was a feat of wizardry. Foster, an' his wife, who are . . . well, I don't wanna be . . . disrespectful . . . but, you know, she's never been petite, in the quarter berth. The opening to this quarter berth on China Bird is about this big. Honest to God, an' you had to sort o' crawl . . . I had trouble getting in all alone. I'm sure they were fuckin' when they went through the opening, cause there's no other way they could'a done it. Smelled lovely for the next week.

JF: I got one up in the forward . . . forward cabin on that trip too.

JS: Who'd you get that time?

RG: I was on this half-tonner (a class of boats about 30 feet long) an' the owner says, "Hey we've got a cook for Friday night." I said, "Fuckin' great!" He said, "Do you see that nice little blonde over there?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "She's coming with us." I said, "Well, that's good. I hope you and she enjoy your fuckin' race. Three . . . you just lost fuckin' three crew." he said, "Now wait, we can take a fuckin' bird." I said, "Over my fuckin' dead body, we will. You take her, you can find another fuckin' crew." So she went over an' told him, told . . . he went over an' told the bird. He said, "Grimesy won't fuckin' let you on the boat. The blokes won't fuckin' sail with you."

JF: Most of these women, they cook, they have to have the . . . the right amount of curry powder, they have to measure all the celery salt. they try to make a fuckin' gourmet meal.

RG: This fuckin', one of these bitches on board every fuckin' meal . . . you couldn't have a leg of lamb, it had to be covered with fuckin' weeds. The first breakfast that came out, I said, "What have you done to those scrambled

eggs?" She said, "Oh, I put garlic and a . . ." some other shit, some other herb, she had a whole locker full of herbs. I said, "Oh, I can't eat that crap. Can you make me two, just some plain scrambled eggs?" You couldn't just have scrambled eggs.

JS: You ever see Patsy Kenedy? She raced over on Eagle when Logo was on 'er. She cooked on the way back. She didn't cook on the way over, but she did on the way back. Every fucking thing she cooked: Peppers and onions. Every fucking thing. You'd wake up in the morning, "Ah, scrambled eggs, great." First you'd smell the peppers and onions then there'd be this "whoosh". For lunch, a little hamburger, spam, something like that, peppers and onions. The only thing that saved her was that we were becalmed and caught thirteen dolphin, you know those little bull dolphin fish. We ate those for four days, we just kept draggin' it out. Because we didn't let her cook anything, we just put it in lemon juice and left it in the sun. [Laughter] The girl was a great hand, but the world's worst fuckin' cook.

JF: That girl that my brother-in-law took on the trip to Cape May, the one with the big how-do-you-do's, she threw up for three hundred and fifty miles. [End of side one.] The engine quit, I mean it's disaster after disaster, right? So finally the engine quits an' oh . . . so we're tired an' Scotty hadn't had any sleep for three days, so we get the Coast Guard to tow us into the marina. We anchored in the fuckin' ship channel, so we get the dinghy off an' . . . overboard, an' Scotty's going to row over to the Coast Guard Station that's right there. You know what this bird says? "While you're ashore, get me a cheeseburger and an order of fries." You never saw anybody about to kill somebody.

JS: You have to forgive her a little though, she did have a hard trip though. First she starts chundering, she and Cook are in there chundering, holding hands, right. An' they were engaged, it was cute. The one time she surfaced, we finally got a little sunshine, she comes out an' sort of toward the companionway, an' Paul Messer tried to be the nice guy an' says, "Gee, those are lovely slacks. I hadn't seen those

before. Hey, Newman, have you seen those slacks before, aren't they nice?" Newman says, "No, I was looking at another part of her anatomy." Then she came out one more time an' somebody, I think Messer offered her a glass of tuna fish oil an' she was right back in like a shot.

RG: Like going to Bermuda last time, the fuckin'. . . I sent the lads down below fuckin' start breakfast. He got down there an' the boss said, "You're not going to cook in this weather are you?"

JF: Blowing what, about two?

RG: No, thirty, we were just getting into the stream. Anyway, he didn't tell me that until after when I went down below for my own breakfast. I said, "You didn't . . . he didn't eat anything did he? You didn't serve him." He said, "Yah." I said, Fuck 'im. I wouldn't even have fed him."

RG: We should be in by tomorrow afternoon.

WR: Here you go, Captain.

DK: You wanna sit here.

JF: No, I'll go in here, the chart room. The executive suite.

JS: An' drool egg all over my fuckin' charts.

JF: Whose fuckin' charts, who fuckin' paid for em?

RG: No coffee stains or anything on there.

JS: No, there's a little spoogie juice over . . .

JF: He got a little excited reading his charts. These navigators are a little strange . . .

JF: Mind if I smoke while you eat? Did you see that movie? Deep Throat? You never saw that? The opening scene, Linda Lovelace comes in, an' her roommate is sitting up on the counter, her legs spread apart an' this grocery boy is eating her madly. She lights a cigarette, an' she picks this kid's head up with her hand, up in the air an' says, "Mind if I smoke while you eat?" Tasteful.

RG: That's like the man in the bar, an' he'd been there for a while. An' he just chundered, right where he was standing, blagh!, all over a fuckin' dog. An' he looks down an' he says, "Fuck, I don't remember eatin' that." [Laughter]

JF: Helping everyone's breakfast.

[There is some discussion about sail selection.]

JS: In case you're interested, the course is not the high part of your swing. [Laughter] Those little cunts that Steere got us on Yankee Girl, they lied so much about the course that when I

got my first sight, after four days on the way to England, a hundred and fifty miles south. A hundred and fifty fuckin' miles after we'd gone about seven fifty.

DK: What's our course, one-ninety.

JF: One ninety-five.

JS: One ninety.

JS: Walter? I was just kidding about, that crack about last night's dinner. Or did you miss it altogether? Somebody asked what was for lunch, an' I said, "I hope it's better than that fuckin' dinner. I figured you hadn't heard it because I would have expected at least a dripping piece of toast.

WR: You might have had a semi-soft egg.

JS: You ever seen my famous egg trick?

SH: I really want to see that, I've never seen that, I love it.

JS: Perhaps in Bahia Mar we'll be graced.

JF: Or perhaps they will not.

JF: Did you hear about Turner taking the Atlanta Braves to the New York Yacht Club for lunch? All the Puerto Ricans and the blacks an' marched 'em in there.

SH: Is that why he was suspended.

JF: No, he was tampering with another team's contract.

JS: He did a couple of other things, I found out later. One was he was quoted on the radio, something about Bowie Kuhn said this or that, an' he said, "Ah, he's too fuckin' old anyway, they oughta replace him." And then a couple of days later, ah, it was Gary Matthews that he was trying to sign, an' he got in trouble for talking to Matthews. He made a comment at a cocktail party to the Giants owner, "I don't care what you bid for Matthews, I'm gonna bid more." And that's what got Kuhn pissed off at him, because he wasn't supposed to say anything like that. That's the rule with the free agent draft. But Turner's lawyer read the rules, and found out that you can have a party, invite the guy to a party, but you can't actually talk about money. So Turner filled all his billboards around Atlanta with big signs saying, "Gary Matthews is coming! to a party." The way it sounds is that he just got Kuhn so pissed off that no matter what happened he was gonna suspend him.[44]

---

[44] 77/5/1 and 2/all

The potential for confusion about what is included in a single narrative is evident from the above transcription. In doing the physical work of transcribing, I thought it would be most useful if some divisions appeared, so that reference back to particular parts of the tape would be facilitated. Grimes' story of the cook stirring dinner with one hand while throwing up in another pot (p. 98, par. 16) demonstrates the arbitrary nature of such divisions. When I had originally made the table of contents for this tape, I had isolated two stories here: the first of the cook cooking and being sick at the same time and the second of Grimes' taking advantage of her weakened condition. In the transcription, they are two motifs in the same story. Given the proper contextual keys, it is possible to see the two parts of the story standing alone and being told separately. Knowing Grimes, however, he would never tell the first part without the second, even if his audience were the Queen Mother. But, on the other hand, I know that I have used the scenario of the two pots in varied contexts, with and without the follow-up motif.

The question here is certainly one of the potential versus the actual, and there are several other stories in this session which stand alone but which I know to exist as parts of larger bodies. The story of Rick Dumoulin and the coat hanger (p. 97, par. 9) is one which I use often.

Recently, since the man who was the professional captain of Ondine at the time of this event has become the professional on a boat from Marblehead, I use this story to describe the fact that he never used to laugh and that this one instance was an exception because he did. In this particular rendition, since the key for the story was entirely different, his name does not even appear.

Four of the stories told in this session are part of a cycle describing a trip Jeff Foster and I made from Cape Cod to Cape May, Virginia. The reasons why they most often exist within the cycle are fairly straightforward: The individuals involved in the trip were members of several different groups of which both Jeff and I are members. After leaving the Navy, Jeff moved to New Hampshire to finish college. He moved in with an old school friend and eventually married the friend's sister. Another of his roommates there was dating the sister of one of my brother's roomates from college. One of the reasons for going to Cape May was that my brother's roommate was stationed in the Coast Guard there. Finally, the other member of the crew was a long-time friend of Jeff's and mine, so the crew brought together my college group, Jeff's college group, his wider circle of friends and in-laws from New Hampshire and our boyhood circle of friends. The stories of this trip are of interest, then, within each of these groups, and

they are most often told together when any of these groups congregates.

In the current context, however, the story of Jeff and his wife in the quarter berth (p. 99, par. 1) is keyed by the subject of sex on board, and the other three stories about his brother-in-law's girlfriend (p. 100, par. 2 & 3) are keyed by stories about the general uselessness of women on boats. I recently asked Jeff to outline the major elements of the story of that trip, and he presented me with a list of thirteen motifs. Although the circumstances of that trip came into the present conversation at two separate times, only four of those thirteen motifs surfaced.

In storytelling sessions such as the one above, the personal experience narrative's true milieu, cycles can and do exist, because certain keys are strong enough to control the flow of the conversation. In this particular case, the fact that the session took place at the time when several crew members had chosen to take their morning constitutionals and the fact that the head on Anduril was separated from the living and eating space only by a green, canvas curtain made a conversation about anything other than heads virtually impossible. The second cycle about food, women and cooks was actually keyed directly by Jeff Foster asking Roger Grimes, "What's your best food story, Grimesy?" and indirectly by the fact that it was breakfast time. It was

strong enough to carry the conversation until the final group of stories about Ted Turner.

In discussing the "strength" of a key, there are two important aspects: first, is the audience generally interested in the topic; and, secondly, are the one or more tellers necessary to keep the topic alive present and willing to do so? The first cycle was of interest because of the immediate context, and five stories were told by the three tellers. The second cycle dealt generally with the topic of life-style on board a small boat and was again of general interest, with twelve stories being told by three tellers.

From the above example, one may see that certain keys will set in motion a series or cycle of stories. What is important in the discussion of the form of personal experience narratives is that they do tend to exist in such cycles but that the cycles are fluid. The fluidity comes from the participation of more than one storyteller, and the close structure one might find in a published collection of stories does not exist of itself in the narratives' real milieu.

While it is not tight or close structure, there is an identifiable control over this story session. In Chapter Six, I will discuss the concept of the control of a storytelling session and Jeff Foster's role in this and other

sessions. It is a role very similar to that of a concert master.[45]

CONTENT

When asked about the previous evening's activities, Chuck Wilson said that he remembered having a long conversation with his mate but that the following morning neither of them could remember what the discussion was about, but "It must have been sailing or sex, that's all I ever talk about."[46] David Buntz goes a step further in quoting "Commodore" Tompkins as saying, "The difference between an ocean racer and a cruiser is the ocean racers talk about women, the cruisers talk about sailing."[47]

While neither of these statements is entirely true, there is statistical evidence within this collection that sailors do like to talk about being off-shore. Of the three hundred and eighty six narratives recorded, excluding jokes, sixty eight percent tell of being at sea. Stories of women, however, account for only six percent of the total.

Comparison of context and venue points out that sea stories are told proportionately more often in contexts ashore than they are while at sea. The stories recorded on

---

[45] See Chapter Six, pp. 226-254.

[46] 77/21/1/103

[47] 78/01/1/013

boats split exactly evenly in describing activities on and off shore, while stories of sailing outnumber stories of shoreside antics three to one in those recorded in contexts on land. When the group telling stories is in the act of sailing, there is no longer a need to establish that commonality of experience, and in most cases, a large proportion of the crew will know each other because of the usual ways in which crews are assembled. They will, therefore, look for other areas of common experience, and nearly any topic is suitable, although as Jeff Foster points out, ". . . you're not gonna discuss daffodils in the middle of the Tasman Sea."[48] When we were in the middle of Bass Straits in the Tasman Sea, however, he did spend a long time discussing golf and how his money would have been better spent on golf club memberships and golf balls than on the boat which placed him in such miserable conditions.

Ashore, whatever the specific context, there is more likely to be a more diverse group. The relationship of each individual to sailing will not be readily observable, as it is in sailing contexts, so each participant in a narrative session will try to explain his relationship through his narratives. It is not only likely that sailing will be discussed, but the conversation is also apt to be restricted to sailing, if as Foster continues, "It's natural

---

[48] 78/3/1/170.

to tell stories of common experience when you meet an old shipmate. Sailing is maybe twenty percent of your lives. You don't care about the other eighty percent of his life - his girlfriends, his mother-in-law, his investments in oil fields."[49]

There is one other area in which there is a marked difference between the stories collected on board boats and those collected on shore, and that is in the tone of the stories. Of the sixty-eight narratives recorded on boats at sea, not one has a serious tone. On the other hand, fifty of three hundred and thirty-five stories told on land had a more or less serious tone. These numbers include the jokes as well as personal narratives. In addition, when one breaks these figures down further, one will see that only five of the stories told on land about shoreside activities are serious; while, forty-five of two hundred, sixteen told on shore about being off-shore have a serious tone.

If these statistics from this collection are representative of the patterns in which professional sailors tell stories, then one is far more likely to hear serious stories of the sea on shore, and he will find more humorous stories about shoreside activities of sailors when he is sailing with them. It is still striking, however, that only

---

[49] 78/3/1/180

fifteen percent of the entire collection consists of serious narratives.

Professional sailors see themselves as a hard-drinking group, and perhaps they even see this characteristic as a link with their traditional predecessors, as described by Morison above.[50] When I asked David Kellett, "Do you think when yachtsmen get ashore they really do drink more than the ordinary person?", he answered, 'Indubitably!'"[51] This could well explain the proportional lack of a serious tone throughout the collection. The generally irreverent nature of the group members, particularly when drinking, would preclude the telling of many serious stories. If story telling and drinking are virtually inseparable as Mike Mitchell suggests, "Christ, I can't tell the story until we've had a few beers,"[52] then the small number of serious narratives is no longer a cause for surprise.

Context certainly affects tone, just as it affects style, form, function and language. "The Great Sea Rescue or 'Yahoo'"[53] was written at the time of the incident and

---

[50]See p. 28.

[51]77/8/1/223.

[52]77/12/1/370

[53]From a collection of my personal logs of sailing passages. See p. 193.

was shared with George Welch expressly for the purpose of lampooning the owner. When told in the relatively serious context of a conversation with Horace Beck, the story took a very different form and tone:

> In that first trip I made from Villa Real de San Antonio, went to Madeira first - it was June - then went to Bermuda an' up. And on the leg to Madeira, there were four of us, we were standing two and two at that point, two on and two off. An' George (Do you know George Welch? He's now yard foreman at Manchester Marine. He designed for Alden for ten years or so.). George and I were below, and we heard the guys on deck: "did you hear that?" Yah, I heard something what . . ." And they went on for fifteen or twenty minutes. Just sat there and listened, and we didn't hear anything again. So we started working our way on again. But they were convinced that they had heard the voice twice. It was calm, reasonable calm, evening, nice breeze, sailing along. They both heard it an' whether it was some kind of, something in the motion of the boat or something in the rigging . . .[54]

The purpose of the story in this context was to amplify Mr. Beck's comments on strange noises heard at sea and, more specifically, the way in which sailors react to such noises. I had forgotten that the actual noise was a "yahoo" in a rain dance, being conducted down below, and I do not remember consciously removing that element of the story.

The irreverent, often flippant nature of the majority of the narratives should not be construed to mean that the sailors have that kind of attitude toward their work, but simply that, when exchanging stories about times at sea,

---

[54] 781611, John Scott.

they prefer to accentuate the humor in the circumstances. There are, for example, eighty-nine stories about storms or severe weather, but in only thirteen cases is the point of the story to describe the weather itself. In many of them, in fact, the weather is not actually described at all, but it is simply alluded to. Roger Grimes describes the weather when the cook could not cook but would eat by simply saying, "Thirty," meaning a wind-speed of thirty knots and the attendant sea conditions.[55] Sixty of these eighty-nine stories in which severe weather plays a role are distinctly humorous.

Another area in which the statistical analysis of this collection is useful in understanding narrative content patterns is that of repetition of topics. In the first analysis, the narratives were divided into twenty-four topics, and these twenty-four were then grouped into the seven categories outlined and discussed below. Removing those stories which begin recording sessions and therefore do not follow other stories in their contexts, 40.6 percent of all narratives follow a story on the same topic, and 50.3 percent of the stories follow others from the same one of the seven categories. This can be seen as both useful information and as a cautionary note about such statistical

---

[55]See p. 100.

analysis. In the first case, there is evidence that a conversation will stay with a topic until it is exhausted to the satisfaction of the tellers, and this supports later comments on the functional importance of a large repertoire, founded in wide experience. However, because there is this tendency to cluster, specific interviews or collections may become superficially weighted toward those topics which are addressed while the narrators are still fresh and interested. The need to introduce other topics for discussion during an interview may seem contrived and tax the informant's patience, because the flow of conversation may not be natural.

Be that as it may, the weight of the statistical evidence is strong enough with eight specific topics to tell something about the general content of professional sailors' stories. Remembering that that overall percentage of stories on one topic following others on that topic is roughly 41 percent, four topics show repetition significantly higher than the norm. They are unusual animals, seasickness, foolish behavior and outrageous behavior. For each of the first three, there is a relatively small number of examples - fourteen, nineteen and nineteen respectively - and yet they have repeat percentages of sixty-four, fifty-eight and fifty-eight. Outrageous behavior is the largest topic, with seventy-five examples in the collection, and it also has a repeat percentage over fifty.

A number of those I asked directly for stories of unusual animals or animal behavior said either that they did not have any such stories or that they would have to think about it. In this case, then, the high percentage of repeats, or sequential stories on the same topic, probably is a result of the small absolute number of such stories. Simply putting in the time at sea does not guarantee that one will see unusual animals or normal animals behaving in abnormal ways, so it is not surprising that these stories would be a small portion of the entire collection, nor does it seem unreasonable that stories which have such infrequent opportunities for airing would be told in clusters when such opportunities do arise.

Seasickness and foolish behavior are things which one would definitely encounter, given any time at sea or among the group ashore. Although they do not represent a disproportionate number of stories when viewed against the entire collection, they each have high incidence of sequential repetition. This would seem to indicate that some process of selection has taken place with each of these topics, and that tellers are well prepared with specific stories once these topics are broached.

The topic of outrageous behavior has more than one and a half times the examples of any other single topic, and it represents nearly twenty percent of the taped collection.

This alone should demonstrate that it is a popular topic of discussion, but the fact that it ranks fourth in sequential repetition confirms its status.

Three topics are squarely on the other end of the spectrum, and they are brokers, heroes and cures. Together, they contributed only two percent of the stories, and there is not a single case in which one story followed another within the topics. No aspect of folk medicine was included in the questionnaire, so the lack of stories about cures is not surprising, and each of the racing boats is required to carry a sophisticated medical kit and a detailed manual on its use, so one would expect individuals to turn to such instruction in the absence of a traditional medical system.

Many responses to the question about heroics consisted of stories of good seamanship but did not contain any special elements carrying them beyond the normal call of duty. One reason for this is that the group has a high regard for its members' ability to cope with the unexpected, and, in fact, the need for heroics would suggest that the job of preparation had not been done well enough. Furthermore, since so many functions on a boat are carried out through coordinated efforts of more than one individual, it would be unusual for a single person to be branded a hero.

The fact that only two stories of yacht brokers were collected on tape does not mean that professionals never encounter them, but it does indicate that stories of brokers' activities are not of any great interest among the group. That neither of these stories elicited response in kind supports the conclusion.

These general comments on the content of professional sailors' narratives originated in the analysis of the stories themselves and in their classification into topics and categories. The outline gives a picture of the overall composition of the collection, and the examples and comments which follow it present more raw material through which to understand better the pervasive attitude of the group and the ways in which they present their experiences.

I. Foolish Behavior. (93)
   - A. Foolishness. (19)
   - B. Foolish Persons. (46)
   - C. Brokers. (2)
   - D. Neophytes. (16)
   - E. Pranks. (10)

II. Outrageous Behavior. (75)
   - A. Group.
   - B. Individual.

III. Life on Board. (75)
   - A. Heads. (15)
   - B. Food. (17)
   - C. Women. (24)
   - D. Seasickness. (19)

IV. Navigation. (72)
   - A. Good Navigation. (10)
   - B. Bad Navigation. (13)
   - C. Seamanship. (49)

1. Serious Stories of Practical Seamanship. (10)
2. Stereotyping. (10)
3. Individual Creativity. (11)
4. Residual. (1)
5. Reactions to Bad Seamanship. (7)
6. Perspectives on Seamanship. (10)

V. General. (30)

VI. Unusual:
- A. Places. (6)
- B. Animals or Animal Behavior. (14)
- C. Events or conditions. (13)

VII. Weather. (13)
- A. Storms. (13)
  1. Serious. (12)
  2. Humorous. (1)
- B. Calms. (0)

Foolish Behavior

Stories of foolishness include those in which the characters have a seeming disregard for the way other people do things or for the fact that the way they do them may seem funny or bizarre to others. This disregard can be the result of lack of attention or lack of interest:

> That's like my friends the Truesdales. They did the '64 Bermuda Race, the race before I did it with them - I did '66 - and, ah, it was a race that was just a reach all the way, a close reach, all the way, and the wind never changed. Except they did get a little too much for the number one, and they changed to the number two. And the entire race they made three sail changes. They went from the number one to the number two, but they had it up upside down, so they took it down and put it back up right side up, and then they went back to the number one. All the way to Bermuda . . . three fucking sail changes.[56]

---

[56] 781645, John Scott.

It is not all that out of the ordinary to make mistakes during sail changes, but it does seem foolish to blow one of only three.

The above is classified as general foolishness, because it was a group effort, involving the entire watch on deck. By far the largest topic included in this category is foolish persons, in which an individual acts foolishly on his own:

> I have always been very fond of coffee. I bought a new pot with a copper bottom, made of stainless steel. I forget, it had a special name . . . "Revere Ware". It cost an arm and a leg in those days, a big coffee pot. I had plenty of coffee. And, one of the crew aboard at this time . . . I didn't know him from Adam, and the kid looked for all the world like a mangy weasel. He arrived late, and he did absolutely nothing but stand around. He got in the way, and within an hour's time he'd upset me. But, we'd already started and it was too late to get him off the boat. We crossed the starting line and headed down for No Mans Land, and we had at least three weeks ahead of us no matter how we shaved it. And I said, "How about making some coffee?" And, Ethelbert said, "fine." I guess it was the second, ya, it had to be the second pot. I said, "Ethelbert, would you mind?" I was down below. I said, "Would you mind rinsing out the coffee pot?" So Ethelbert gave a pained look, took the coffee pot and held it over the side, and he let go of it. An' the frigging coffee pot went right down in two hundred . . . and everybody on the boat hung their head over the side and they looked. Their mouths fell open, and they looked at Ethelbert. And Ethelbert smiled and said, "Oh, sorry!"
>
> And a little while later, the son of a bitch, we got in a gale of wind and, ah, I said, "Well, boys, I think the best thing to do is to get everything snugged down an' get the shutters on

> the, a, portholes." So I reached in the cupboard and I got out my special little screws, that fitted in the little specially prepared holes for the shutters. An' I said, "Here, Ethelbert, put these on," and handed up the shutters, so he took the shutters and threw the screws overboard. And I said, "Ethelbert, you stupid son of a bitch, you just threw the screws overboard." "Oh, sorry!," he said.[57]

Stories of foolish persons are third in frequency, and they are distinguished by the fact that the foolish behavior displayed is persistent in nature and often annoying if not dangerous to the other members of the crew. Although only six of forty-six of these stories are told in a serious fashion, many of the incidents described were far from humorous at the time. In the first example above, the fool affects the comfort of the crew for virtually the entire duration of the race, but in the second he actually jeopardized the safety of the crew. Both stories are told as humorous now, but that must include some erosion of the actual feelings with time.

The two recorded stories about brokers portray them as buffoons, and they are typical of other stories I have heard about the people who sell yachts. Brokers are easily lampooned because they often behave the way they think that their customers would expect them to, thus presenting themselves as caricatures of the average owner. Socially,

---

[57] 781629 and 781630, Horace Beck.

this puts them on the other side of owners from the professionals, who either cannot or will not attempt to understand them at all.

> I guess Ralph Walker, the '75 Halifax Race. We finished at, ah, between five and six in the morning, and we were nineteenth boat across or something. We were pretty sure we'd done well, an', ah, it was one of those weird races where the one-tons beat you, an', ya know, it was weird. We docked the boat at quarter after six, I think, in the morning, at the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron and there's fucking Ralph Walker - he had navigated Mad Cap - in his red pants, white socks, topsiders, blue shirt buttoned down, his Bermuda tie and his blazer. An' I said, "Ralph, what are you doin', Boy?" He said, "Walking the docks." I said, "Ralph, it's quarter after six in the morning." "You never know when you can pick up some listings."[58]

With the exception of "factory boats", which have complete crews of professional boatbuilders, sailmakers and spar builders, most boats must be satisfied with a nucleus of regulars, and they almost always find themselves with some unknowns like the fool in Horace Beck's stories above. In other circumstances, the individual may be perfectly pleasant, but his or her lack of knowledge causes the same vexation as the complete and persistent fool's:

> This is Scott's corollary and Murphy's Law. "If things can go wrong . . ." and the corollary is that they go wrong when you've gone to the head after breakfast and your wife has the wheel. You remember when we were going through the Annisquam Canal, I don't know if you were aboard,

---

[58] 780352, Jeff Foster.

> but your mother had the wheel, and I looked out the porthole and saw the buoy that should have been on the other side.[59]

It is bad enough in a family cruising situation, but the presence of such individuals becomes worse when they are necessary in the completion of a maneuver involving the entire crew. In situations like these, it would be better to have one person less and to plan accordingly.

As well as the stories of neophytes at sea, this group includes those stories which tell of the exchange between sailors and persons who completely lack any knowledge at all of boats. For example, a couple walked down the dock at the Clearwater, Florida, Municipal Marina to where we had Yankee Girl moored, and she asked, "Jakie, what do they use the center pole for?"[60] By "center pole" she meant the mainmast.

Because of the stories about the interchange with landsmen, this topic splits nearly evenly between stories of the sea and those of the land. Apparently, neophytes are a cause of amusement rather than of great concern, because there is only one serious narrative in the collection, and that recalls an instance in which stories of worse weather

---

[59] 781127, Robert Scott.

[60] 780124, John Scott.

conditions were told to a green crew to ease their fears at the conditions they were experiencing.[61]

Although there are many stories of joking behavior included in the following category and many of the stories in this category make fun of individuals or groups, there are only ten which are truly about practical jokes, where an individual is specifically placed in a position to be tricked. The others are not practical jokes because the butt of the joke is never meant to realize that a joke has been played on him.[62] The two examples which follow are from the same informant, and they exemplify the two subtopics of jokes played on groups and those played on individuals.

There are two possible reasons why five stories of practical jokes come from one informant when there are only ten in the entire collection. The first is that the subject as such was not broached with other informants. The second is that this particular individual liked participating in practical jokes, even as the butt, as a means of getting attention within the group. As strong evidence for the latter, during the time I sailed with this informant, I

---

[61] 781619, John Scott.

[62] For further discussion of practical jokes, see Richard S. Tallman, "A Generic Approach to the Practical Joke," Southern Folklore Quarterly, 38 (1974), 259-74, and the rest of this special edition edited by him.

often played a joke with eggs which involved talking about how I would pass an egg in one ear and out of the other, smash the first egg on one side of my head and hold up the other egg as evidence of the success of the trick. It is a messy story to tell, but it usually receives good response. At the crew dinner following the S.O.R.C. on which David Buntz and I sailed together, he asked if he could participate in this stunt, knowing that he would be the one to have the egg broken on the side of his head.

> Then there was the time that the head mysteriously disappeared out of the famous Australian ocean racer, Ballyhoo. Well the crew decided they were going to go out drinking. In the meantime, a competitor - a rather infamous ocean racer which now has a semi-bad reputation - but there was another C&C 61 owned by a fellow in California who likes to do 360° rolls with his boat. But anyway, they wanted to get a little pre-race practical joke against Mr. Rooklyn, so they turned off the seacocks, unbolted the head and hoisted it to the top of the masthead. Mr. Rooklyn came back and saw his new masthead light.[63]

And on the individual level:

> I was the recipient of one of the world's greatest practical jokes, twice. Again you had to be there. Um, on a boat, okay, one day I was kind of reluctant to get out of my berth. The owner came down and decided he was going to remove me. This is Wes. They are pipe berths, mind you, that are held in place by four-to-one tackles. He released the tackles.[64]

The second story contains more evidence that the large

---

[63] 780115, David Buntz.

[64] 780116, David Buntz.

proportion of practical jokes in this interview are not a result only of the collecting. The fact that the joke was played twice indicates first that Buntz reacted properly to the prank, giving the perpetrator the incentive to repeat the joke, but, secondly, it shows that on two occasions he was late getting out of his bunk. This is a definite faux pas, since it leaves the watch on deck shorthanded and prevents somebody else from getting his proper rest. Finally, he often says in all of his narratives, "Again, you had to be there," implying that he realizes that he is not able to do a good job creating the matrix within which the story action takes place. This would make him an ineffective storyteller and would mean that his position in the group would be left to other storytellers, so his efforts are turned to making himself the subject of other people's stories, even if it must be as the butt of jokes.

The stories in this category share the element of foolishness, whether it is caused by inattention, stupidity, role-playing lack of experience or the feeling that a play situation exists. Although the actions described may have been annoying or even dangerous at the time, in nearly all cases the humor of the situation will come forward in time. After ten years the sarcasm involved in the Great Sea Rescue is replaced by grudging respect for the individuals and the circumstances. Even though he boiled coffee without a proper

pot for years afterwards and cursed Ethelbert each time it boiled over, Horace Beck can now see the humor, however wry, in the losing of the coffee pot.

What allows the second Ethelbert story to be humorous is that his ineptitude did not cause a disaster. The story would certainly be very different if his losing the screws had prevented the covering of the large portholes and one of these had been stove in by a wave, causing damage and the possible loss of the vessel, but they survived the storm and completed the race.

Neophytes, like fools, often bring events to the brink of serious injury or disaster, but in most cases problems are avoided by the actions of others. There is a slight sneer implied in almost all of these stories, and by telling of the foolishness of others, tellers of these stories show the k.. of behavior to be avoided and so point to the proper kinds of behavior by the contrast. The very telling of these stories implies that the teller recognizes the foolishness and would not be guilty of such behavior himself, thus identifying himself as a qualified member of the group.

Outrageous Behavior

The topic with the largest number of recorded examples is outrageous behavior, and it forms a category in itself which is divided only according to group or individual

actions. These stories tell about activities which purely and simply make a statement about group identification which says that the group will act in any way it pleases, defies any attempts to prohibit those actions and warns that any righteous indignation by outsiders will only serve to heighten the enjoyment derived from the actions.

As one might expect, not one of these stories has a serious tone, and of seventy-five narratives only eleven do not describe sailor's relations with people on shore. They do not, however, tell of practical jokes because the victims are not asked to appreciate the humor nor are they usually aware that their own normal behavior may be cause for amusement to others who are behaving abnormally. This kind of behavior and the narratives associated with it are esoteric to the highest degree. It simply does not matter to the actors whether anybody else sees the humor in the situations of the stories. These are cases in which the group is performing for or talking to itself. Outside approval or approbation only serves to highlight the context of the actions, but in neither case is there a need for reaction.

Since two long examples are included and discussed later,[65] there is no need to present any here which describe outrageous behavior by the group, but two examples of individual outrages will be useful for discussion:

---

[65] See pp. 182-83 and 188-91.

> We proceded to come back to the god-damned boat. We stopped someplace to pick up, we had a gal. Nice young gal, waitress we'd picked up. One guy, Bill Moores, who weighs about two-fifty, he's tryin' to get her up on the boat to root 'her. An' he's carrying her across the god-damned dock an' dropped her in the water. I'm sleepin' an' I hear this, "Help!" I get up there an Moores, "Are you all right?", he yells at her. An' she's fuckin' thrashing. An' it took us about ten minutes to get her out of the water. I was fast asleep, an' I'm just starting to wake up. Moores was no fuckin' help. "You gotta get her out of there, I'm gonna fuck 'er tonight." He didn't buy the way. She got pissed at him.
>
> Oyster Bay, for the start of one of the . . . : Oyster Bay Race. Shuff's got Gypsy down there, ya know. Now he goes ashore, he's anchored out, right. This is - ya gotta figure it out - this is many years before any of us have . . . this is a strange fuckin' group. So Shuff goes ashore an' after the bar closes an' it's two o'clock in the morning an' he's got to get himself out to the boat somehow. So he steps in this fucking dinghy and the dinghy rolls. Shuff's in the fuckin' water, an' he's too drunk to climb out. So he says, "Well, fuck it!" He just hung his, he had a foul weather jacket on, an' he hung his foul weather jacket over a cleat on the god-damned dock and went to sleep. He woke up in the morning, and his feet were touching bottom. "Well, okay, I can get out of here."[66]

Over two-thirds of the stories in this category specifically mention the over-consumption of alcohol. This has certainly been a major factor in the sailors' stereotype throughout history, and this raises some interesting questions. Does one assume that there is something attractive in a life at sea for people who drink too much, or do those who go to

---

[66] 780645 and 780646.

sea eventually succumb to the evils of drink? The answer to the first part could well be that a peripetetic lifestyle is necessary for anyone whose drinking leads to problems whenever he settles in one place for too long. Or, perhaps, long voyages could be seen as a good chance to dry out and to save money, neither of which is easy for the heavy drinker on shore. Still, I think that the answers to the second part of the question are more to the point. I have already mentioned that long abstention from any drink can amplify the effects of the first renewal of drinking, but life at sea has an even stronger effect on individuals. Any vessel becomes a microcosm of the world outside, and each sailor - by training in the neatness aspects of seamanship and by long periods alone with his thoughts - learns to be comfortable keeping to himself. Furthermore, the crew is responsible for its ship only and tends to withdraw and to be concerned only with what is happening inside its own horizons.

These tendencies are not necessarily antisocial, but they are certainly asocial in that the sailor, as an individual or as part of a crew, tends to forget that his actions may affect others who are just outside of his perceptual horizons. Whether or not he is aware of the effects of his behavior, he does not particularly care. The complement to a sailor's self-reliance is his unwillingness to have others rely on him, since he feels that they, too, should be self-

reliant. Since alcohol tends to lessen the perceptual horizons, it must certainly contribute to the asocial aspect of the sailor's behavior.

In the stories above, this microcosmic world view is evident. Moores could not see why his romantic intentions should suffer simply because he dropped the waitress in the harbor. Shuff dealt with his problem in a practical way, not caring about the reactions of any early arrivals on that yacht club dock.

One further example of the stories on outrageous behavior shows that this behavior is not necessarily linked to alcohol:

> Bolten tells a story where the guys were trying to put a messenger through the boom on the boat. Grossfinger says to them, "I got a better idea," they were trying to push it through with a pipe. Finger gets a spear gun, ties the messenger to the end of the spear gun and fires it up through the boom. It comes out the end of the boom, goes through the flag on the transom and into the radiator of a car parked in the parking lot. (JS: As I heard it, he walked up on the dock - the guy's sitting in the car - he walks up, gets the fuckin' thing out of the radiator, and water starts pouring out when he takes his spear away, an' he walks back on the boat, threads it back through the flag, an' just goes back on the boat.)[67]

This shows that the refusal to acknowledge the rest of the world does not need alcohol, but it may well become more determined with alcohol.

---

[67] 771111, Lenny Burke and John Scott.

The fact that there are so many stories in this category shows that the group considers the behavior acceptable and even laudable. One wonders if the frequency of these stories, which cannot fail to impress initiates to the group, is not generating more of this kind of behavior, but that is the work of a different kind of research.

Life on Board

The next category is life on board. It includes stories from four topics, beginning with heads, food and women and ending with seasickness. The first three include stories of the normal, daily functions which are made difficult because they have to take place on a boat. The last describes an affliction which contributes to the difficulty of everything else done on board. In the entire category, there are seventy-five stories, and only one about seasickness is serious. Fourteen deal with events ashore and, with the exception of one food story about provisioning for a trip, all of these are about women.

In general, the stories in this category are straightforward, and the only function they serve is to bear witness that the teller has spent time off-shore, but the stories of seasickness imply that the teller does not suffer from this embarrassing and unmanly condition.

> You know the way those "Skipper" heads are, the porcelain ones, the popular porcelain ones that you pump. The seat on it is held by a plastic, kind of Delrin, pin. I was sitting on that baby, we were heeled over, grindin' one out. I got ours rigged up so that if you really had to go in for a serious dump, you'd face aft. You can get your left foot propped up just right, cause the shape of the hull comes down. But, your right foot was a little bit low - you couldn't really prop yourself. You know those little step things that you buy that flip up and flip down? I bought one of those babies and screwed it into the bulkhead, so you could get both legs up an' just really . . . let go. I was in there for the count, and the boat was heeled over far enough that I was leaning against the wall and I wasn't paying attention to this pin, and the whole seat came loose, an' I slid right off that baby, an' I got my nuts right in between the bowl and the slidin' off. Rebel yell: "Aughhhhh!" People are going', "What are you doin' in there?" It was a mess. There were streak marks all over the place. It had to be the worst experience I've ever had on a boat, fuckin' awful. I had to clean the whole head up.[68]

Stories about the head either tell of the problems of using the facility on a moving platform, as in the example above, or they describe the problems arising from the idiosyncracies of the marine toilet itself, such as the story of the coathanger on page 97. Food receives a similar treatment, and the stories either involve the problems of cooking on a moving stove and the resulting messes or the difficulties in cooking for as many as twenty-five, in two sittings, with apparently inadequate equipment.

Cooks, especially on boats with larger crews and in longer races, generally do not stand a watch, so with the

---

[68] 781915, Chuck Wilson

navigators they are often made to feel slightly removed from the actual business of the rest of the crew. They usually may sleep through the night, and although they work hard for the privilege, this sometimes runs against the grain of other crew members. The quality of the food and its preparation often determine whether these feelings develop beyond a kidding stage:

> Bolton used to tell the story of that guy they brought across on one of the boats, trans-Atlantic on one of the boats. The guy that brought all the food, an' he couldn't cook anything. They played a trick on the old Kialoa, I think before even Kendall got on it. Trans-Atlantic. They got this guy who wanted to go back to England, an' they said, "Well, we'll get you a ride as a cook on a boat. All you gotta be able to do is just cook any old shit, the guys don't care. And you'll get a free trip, an' it won't cost you anything." Bolton was one of the instigators. And he said, "Ya, I'll be in that." I'm sure it was Kilroy, it wasn't Long. They told him the guy they'd got was a Cordon Bleu Chef, who wanted to go home to England, and the guy is unbelievable. He gets sort of an open account to go vittle the boat for trans-Atlantic, and he gets a truckload of food. He got so much stuff that half of it can't fit in the boat. An' they told him that this was no cheap run shit deal, we don't want that chicken garbage, we want pheasant. So the guy's got all this exotic food, an' he can't cook anything. So the first day they get out there, an' he's down below trying to boil sausages. So the crew gets pissed off at him, the owner gets pissed off at him, and in the end the only place they'll let him sleep is way up in the forepeak with the sails. They're opening the hatches and dropping wet sail bags on him. Bolton reckons they were yelling down the hatches, "This is God, you motherfucker. We want bacon and eggs for breakfast!"[69]

---

[69] 771101, Lenny Burke.

It is remarkable how jealous one becomes about one's sleep at sea, particularly when one is allowed twelve hours off watch, and it is the cook who has the most control over the regularity of the watch changes. If he is late serving the meal to the on-going watch, they feel guilty for relieving the others late, and the watch on deck is annoyed at having to stay up even a few extra minutes, especially if they have had a strenuous watch. The meals also become overly important because they are the only recreational time on board, so the cook actually has passive control of crew morale. Good meals served in a timely manner, can do a great deal in maintaining spirits.

Some cooks are aware enough of this passive role to turn it into an active one. They will not only add special touches to the food or to the way it is served, but they will sometimes also take other opportunities to affect morale in a positive way. On the Sydney-Hobart Race on Anduril, the cook and the navigator took turns reading from the "Good Book" to the watch on deck. The "Good Book" was a copy of Gershon Legman's The Limerick.[70]

Stories about cooks and cooking, therefore, almost always deal with a specific cook's ability to conform to the norm. A good, solid job by the cook will rarely be the

---

[70]This was the Castle Books reprint which acknowledges neither the author nor the date of publication.

subject of a story. Most sailors who have not had to cook themselves are not aware of the special problems facing the cook, but they do not care as long as his doing of his job does not adversely affect their doing theirs. Eating and using the head are normal, daily functions, and a crew is most comfortable at sea when nothing unusual happens in either area. In fact, there seems to be an effort made to normalize everything, so as to avoid reminding oneself that one is in a basically fragile craft in a hostile environment. For the same reason, when the weather is good, sailors will not talk about storms or calms, as is discussed in the later section on unusual events.

Women on board instantly threaten this attempt to sublimate the abnormal aspects of life at sea. In the first place, sailors on long passages have by necessity consented to abstain from normal sexual activity. A woman on board only serves to remind them of the fact. I think there is also an element of machismo which makes some men interested in ocean racing, and seeing a woman doing the same work capably would destroy their ability to congratulate themselves on their manliness. In most cases where there is one woman on board, she is automatically designated to be cook, whether she is the best cook or not. This undoubtedly happens because cooks have a different status on board anyway, and to have a woman as cook is not as threatening to

the male ego. This role will undoubtedly change as the role of women in general changes, but the other aspect of sailors' relationship with women will probably be very much slower to change. Sailors will always be in strange ports for short periods and will continue to form relationships during those stays, and they will still have to leave when the ship goes.

Because women so often end up as cooks when they go to sea, there are some stories which could easily be in either topical section, but of those specifically identified as being about women, thirteen told of women ashore and eleven of women at sea. Not one of the stories is serious.

The first example tells of the slightly special rules which must be made when the owner's wife comes along on a race. The owner in this case is Pat Haggarty, founder and chairman of Texas Instruments, who normally raced a highly competitive, smaller boat with an all male crew, but took the race from Bermuda to Spain as an opportunity to sail his eighty foot motorsailor and to take his wife along:

> ". . . Mrs. Haggarty, Mrs. Haggarty, get down in your back cabin, we're all gonna take a shower." A bucket over the side, with buckets of water. She'd say, "Okay, now I'm gonna take a shower now. All you guys face the other way." Here she is, bare-ass naked on the back of the boat, an' I don't think anybody ever looked around. I doubt that she would even . . . can you imagine Mrs. Haggarty, with about eighteen fuckin' guys within twenty foot of her?[71]

---

[71] 780655, Bill Bennett.

Two small points arise in this story which are worth comment. First, even in the context in which this story was told, Bill Bennett still referred to her as "Mrs. Haggarty" showing the level of respect that this couple, as owners, commanded. Secondly, his uncharacteristic use of "the back of the boat" shows that this trip on the motorsailor had a definitely lighthearted tone, and this tone pervaded the entire fleet because of the very light air over the entire course.

The second example is rather more typical of the sailor's narrative treatment of women:

> Salt of the earth, women, yes. . . . The first time I really got involved with a woman on a boat was my first Hobart. I was nineteen years old, something, eighteen. It was on a thirty footer. We'd won the Montague Island an' just about every damn race in Sydney except the Hobart Race, we got twentieth, but . . . One of the guys on the crew had a very lovely wife, and a, Cecily her name was, but he didn't get along with her terribly well. An', ah, he had this chick he shacked up with every now and again. So, we got into Hobart an' as we're coming through the drawbridge, here was Ces up on the, up on the quay, waving down at us, "Hello, Fred!" Cecily, his wife. On the other side, standing where we were going to moor, his girlfriend. Oh, geez, I forget her name. Anyway, there's the girlfriend there waving, "Hello, Fred!" McClure turns to me an' says, "What the fuck?" "Look, I'll tell you what," I said, "I'll grab your girlfriend an' whisk her away and park her." I was a fairly young eighteen, I think.
>
> JS: That was before you met Jennifer, right?
>
> You basta'd. . . . So anyway, as we were going in, he noticed Sundowner, which had a whole bunch of Middle Harbour guys. He says, "Well, oh shit, take her down to Sundowner and buy her a drink or something until I can get away." Apparently it had blown up on him a couple of times, an' she decided this was going to be the big salvation, she was

> going to save the marriage. Okay, so I jump off the boat as soon as we get in, an' I take the girlfriend down while Ces is walking down to the boat. An' I say, "Oh, hi, Ces, how are ya?" Get this girl off on to Sundowner, come back about an hour later after pawning her off on some guy. There, he's caught for the night. It's three o'clock in the morning, an' ah, so McClure did his thing, an' this girl apparently went to sleep on Sundowner. Anyway, nine o'clock the next morning, Fred decided that he'd better go get some ice. He and his wife and I and a couple of other guys are sitting up, and Fred says, "Geez, we're getting low on ice, Charlie. I'll just walk up the road and get some." So, Ces says, "Well I'll come with you." "Oh no, look, stay and talk to David for a couple of minutes. I'm just going up there. It won't take me a minute." So I said, "Ya, Ces, let's hear about Hobart. Did you see much of Hobart in the last couple of days?" Bullshit, bullshit, bullshit . . . McClure came back two and a half days later. His wife: "Did you bring the ice?: "No, I forgot it."[72]

The brief exchange in the middle of the narrative is nearly as telling as the example itself. When David Kellett had met the Jennifer in question, he had made the mistake of telling some of the rest of the crew that he thought she was very pretty, and it had become a standing joke to talk about his quest for her favors. It is simply representative of the attitude toward women that no one was willing to believe that he would find her attractive without chasing her, regardless of his own or her marital status.

It is not difficult to understand why the subject of women would be treated in a male chauvinist way among sailors

---

[72] 770708, David Kellett.

at sea, because to talk of real emotions would only heighten the feeling of separation from loved ones, and the general effort is to lessen or sublimate those things which emphasize the abnormal aspects of life at sea.

Another major aspect of life on the ocean in small boats is seasickness. We have seen how the motion alone can make daily tasks more difficult, but when it leads to seasickness, the constant motion can be completely crippling. Seasickness, like bad weather, is a fact of life at sea. There are many narratives, such as David Kellett's which follows in the section on seamanship, in which the actions of the characters are based on the fact that some portion of the crew is disabled by seasickness but in which the main purpose is to describe the behavior of the remaining crew members. Of the nineteen stories which concentrate on the seasickness itself, only one has a serious tone. Again, this appears to be a situation in which the main thrust of the narratives is to ridicule the weakness that appears in others and, thus, to imply one's own strength by comparison.

Only five of the stories are told off-shore, and of these, four are told during breakfast on a calm morning and the other is told when the boat is stuck in the mud on a calm morning. There are enough people whose control over their own queasy feelings is tenuous enough that stories of seasickness are unlikely to be told in situations where some

individuals could go one way or the other in terms of their own strength of stomach. Nor is it surprising that all nineteen take place at sea, except that I do know of stories about the feeling akin to seasickness which can arise when one first steps ashore after a long passage. After long periods of acclimatizing oneself to the motion, one may suffer from the lack of motion at the first contact with solid ground.

The first two examples are of the humorous stories typical of the treatment of seasickness. The first shows how victims can poke fun at themselves, even when they are in the midst of feeling terrible. The second demonstrates the most common form of seasickness narratives, in which the narrator describes somebody else's discomfort.

> God, I remember one fella I was shipmates with on Wander Bird, an' he was just a real chronic seasicker. By God, I went all the way across the Atlantic with him in '35, an' by God, he showed up in '39 to go across the Pacific, and still was seasick, but he loved it. I remember one time he, ah, arose from the lee rail, an' he smiled, an' he said, "Ya know," he said, "I'm ahead of you guys. I get six meals a day. Three down. Three up."[73]

> With this black horror building right in front of us . . . Rich, have you heard this story?
> RR: I must have heard the tail of it.
> . . . bringing Jack's boat back from Clearwater?
> We can't. I came down to sail, now I'm a condominium. We had, ah, Fletcher on board. Jack, Charlie, myself an', ah, oh Jesus, a lawyer . . . it doesn't make any difference . . . Bo Stevens. Bo and Fletcher wanted a little off-shore experience -

---

[73] 781130, Robert Scott.

never had it before - so we had a very quiet, nice sail going up an' we got off San Blas, an' ya know we saw this thing building an' . . . a huge front coming through. The weather had been predicting it coming through. So Fletcher says, "My turn to fix dinner." So he goes down an' gets this god-damned dehydrated chili - he didn't add enough water to it to start with - cooks that up with hot dogs. So we're all sittin' there eatin', Charlie goes to sleep 'cause it's gonna be a long night. So I had two helpin's, everybody had two helpin's, four hot dogs an' big bowls of chili - partially cooked. Well, Jesus, you know there wasn't enough water in the goddamned stuff. So we get in there an' all of a sudden, we get just past San Blas, up in that corner, we were tacked over, get in toward Tyndall's Light, an' then we were gonna tack back out, an' that son of a bitch hit. It was the first time we ever had that damned boat, first of all, in any kind of a beat where we were on a lee shore. I hope it will be the last. I mean, the waves, you know how fast they build up in those shallows, it only takes about ten minutes. Ten minutes after the wind came up, ten minutes! Bo's in the bilge throwin' up. Fletcher's out here layin' over the deck, throwin' up. So we felt sorry for 'em. It got bitter cold. We put our foul weather gear on. They threw up some more down below an' then they came back up an' threw up again, an' just runnin' back an' forth. Jack's down there lookin' at the chart which he didn't have, he had no chart to duck into Panama City, an' he's smokin' this big, long goddamned cigar. About that time, Fletcher'd been throwin' up for goddamned thirty, forty minutes, an hour - I don't know - he was dying. Now he was down to the point where he didn't have anything left to throw up but bile. I said, "Fletcher, why don't you go below an' take a little nap? If you go to sleep, you'll feel better." So Fletcher headed for the damned cockpit an' got about this far, an' about that time jack whipped around with this long, goddamned cigar: "Ain't got no goddamned inland waterway chart to get into Panama City!" Blew that goddamned cigar smoke in Fletcher's face. He leaned over the rail an', "Blaagh!" He said, "Aagh, I'll tell you what. Aagh! I'll give you my three cars. Blaagh! My wife. Blaagh! My life insurance. Aagh! My. . ." He enumerated every piece of property he owned, an' then there

> was a hesitation an' he finally came back, "Aagh! An' my bank account my wife doesn't know about!" That poor son of a bitch wanted to get into Panama City. We only had about four hours of that, an' he threw up another four hours.[74]

This second story is a good example of sailors' narratives for several reasons. First, like stories on any topic, the narrator takes care to identify the boat, the crew, the location and the weather conditions. Secondly, he describes the complicating circumstances, consisting of the fact that they had not had that boat in heavy weather on a lee shore before and also that they did not have the proper charts to duck in out of the weather. Finally, he details the elements which pertain directly to seasickness, including the underdone chili, the particularly rough and sudden seas and the cigar smoke. Furthermore, he had already mentioned that two of the crew members were not experienced in off-shore sailing, thus setting them up for special attention in the narrative.

This version, as recorded, also demonstrates two of the elements of performance style, as discussed later in chapter six. The storyteller first seeks confirmation of the established nature of the story from Rich Riddle, and he receives it when Rich says that he "must" have heard the end of it at least. Augmentation, on the other hand, is usually not

---

[74] 770101, Mike Merritt with Rich Riddle and John Scott.

solicited and expands on certain details. In this case, the augmentation comes from myself and is the result of that fact that at the time the story was told we were stuck in mud in the middle of the entrance channel to Clearwater, Florida.

Another aspect of this particular narrative which is typical of stories about seasickness is the apparent heartlessness of some of the other crewmembers. In this instance, it was "Jack" with his cigar who made life even more difficult for the victim. In many cases, however, the person picking on the seasick one does it in an active way, actually taunting him.[75] On the passive level, this shows that some individuals are well able to go on with their normal habits in spite of weather that causes seasickness in others. When the abuse of the sick persons becomes active, such as offering them warm tuna oil, it would seem that the perpetrator feels compelled to show off his stronger stomach, either to the victim or to the others on board, at the expense of the ailing one.

In spite of the fact that seasickness is treated humorously in the large majority of narratives, it can be a serious problem at sea. Jeff Foster tells of a time when he had to give a large, tough Marine a shot of glucose because of his continued problem with seasickness, but even this story has a humorous tone in the way it describes how

---

[75]See p. 100.

the proud Marine was brought low by the affliction.[76] The same conversation, however, led to the following exchange:

> SH: Oh, Shit! I'm really sorry the guy's sick, but goddamn it, why am I standing his watch?
> JS: We had one guy on the race to England on Adele, an older guy. Anyway, he was sick, and, ah, on Adele there weren't enough bunks, ya know, there were just enough bunks to go around. So, when he was sick and had to be in a bunk, it meant that somebody . . . ya know, we had to fuck up the watch system first of all, and secondly there was somebody on every other watch who had to sleep on the deck.[77]

This is a fairly terse version of this story, in the telling of which I often describe the conditions during Hurricane Amy which hit us on the second night of the race, but we had neared the end of the conversation on seasickness and this served as much as a confirmation of the story Steve Haesche had just told as it took a place as a narrative in its own right.

Unless there is something unusual in the particular case of seasickness, or at least something humorous in the incident, tales of bad weather and seasickness that usually accompanies bad weather generally ignore the plight of the sufferers and focus on the seamanship of those who are still functioning, and this is the subject of the next category.

---

[76] 780339, Jeff Foster.

[77] 780346, John Scott with Steve Haesche.

Navigation

Navigation, in the larger sense of the word, includes not only the determining of the position of the vessel and the avoidance of the many hazards of the sea, but it also encompasses examples of the proper operation of the vessel regardless of its position, and this topic is labelled, "seamanship". Of the category's seventy-two recorded examples, ten deal with good navigation, thirteen with bad navigation and forty-nine with seamanship, which makes it the second largest topic and by a great deal the largest topic dealing strictly with events off-shore. The largest single topic, outrageous behavior, has more recorded examples, but only one third of those take place off-shore.

Good navigation is basically unspectacular, and since the professional is required to have this skill above most others, it is not surprising that there are few stories about it. In fact, nine of the ten stories involve racing, where there is a chance for one navigator's work to be superior by shaving a few minutes from the trip. In delivery situations, there is almost always enough time to allow caution to prevail over speed and navigational daring. These stories, then, are typically about navigation which is so good that real navigators would recognize that there is an element of luck and good helmsmanship by the rest of the crew which caused things to turn out as they did.

> Well, I remember one that I think that impressed me most was in the New London to Marblehead Race with the Morses. You know Harry Morse, or you know who Harry Morse is - for your information he was summa cum laude from Harvard in Physics and went on from there. We were beating out Nantucket Sound, an' we took a swing out of the channel, an' we came back to pick up the buoy - I mean thick - an' we picked up the buoy with the bowsprit, "Whump!". I was impressed.[78]

Even the stories of bad navigation are concerned only with examples of true blunders, because every navigator has had some surprises, or he has not been doing it long enough. Not one of the recorded stories of bad navigation tells of disaster, but only of embarrassment or humiliation or, possibly, foolish behavior. The navigator gets drunk and enjoys the lovely evening while ignoring the coastal current and losing the race for his crew,[79] or he sleeps most of the race and arises saying, "I'm the navigator, I have a right to know where I am."[80] They are generally terse accounts of the facts which speak eloquently enough, without a great deal of elaboration.

> The same time, the guy on Saga, I can't think of his name, the guy that navigated for 'em all the time, that brought 'er back from Bermuda. They ended up in Montauk. They missed Long Island Sound by the length of it.[81]

---

[78] 781122, Robert Scott.

[79] 770707, David Kellett.

[80] 760105, Jeff Foster

[81] 780673, Bill Bennett.

Seamanship is really at the heart of the professional sailor's life and work, and one thing that characterizes sailing is that it presents continual change and requires adaptability as well as stamina, creativity and perspective. Stories from this category are presented in six sub-categories to demonstrate the variety of skills which combine to embody seamanship. The first example is a story of practical seamanship, in many of its manifestations, and tells at length what is involved in dealing with severe weather:

> It was brought out to me in 1970 when we had Bicardi, a Coles forty-three footer. An' there was Rumrunner, her sistership, an' we were both moored on the same dock, an' Jimmy Turner was sailing master of Rumrunner. An' we both set off in the Hobart, an' with the guys that he had aboard, he probably had ten to twelve times as much experience as we did. He had a bunch of old guys, an' for day racing and racing around the buoys they were great. They had had so many more years of trimming sails, an' they left us for dead in some of them. And, ah, we went off and we went racing down the coast, and that was fine. We got the boat squared away, but they had just a little bit more helming experience than we had, an' in a forty-five knot run, they inched away about five miles in front of us, which I was pissed about. There was only two or three of us that could steer the boat properly. Everyone was having a drive, as we do with this boat, but there was only two or three of us that could get the twelve knots out of her at times, an' ah, we were off, then we got becalmed. Peter Cole, who is a super guy, never, never really know him, but once it blows over about twenty-five knots, Coley goes to the bunk. He has a toothache or something like that that he can't sail with. So, he shoots off into the berth, and that's where he stays until the wind dropped down an' the boat stands up an' he'll come out again. We got a couple of poopers on that run, an' Coley came up an' I'd been on the helm for a couple of hours. I was the only one on my watch who would steer. All the other guys were no help,

they wouldn't drive. Coley came up. "Oh, terrific, Coley's gonna give me a spell for a while." An' he came up an' sat down on the mainsheet traveller and watched me for a while. About ten minutes went by, he tapped me on the shoulder, "You're doing a terrific job, Dave," an' he went back to bed. So I guess that was in the afternoon, an' the next day at about five o'clock we were becalmed, an' Coley came up an' took over, an' I went down for a nap. It was very light air. he and the boys worked well against Rumrunner, and we were about a mile and a half in front of her and, ah, the breeze started in, on the nose, an' we were right in on the shore, so the only way to go was out to sea. So we're doing hourly tacks, we're going out for an hour and in for an hour, and about midday we were out about ten miles off the coast, and we were becalmed again. It was a very eerie sensation, red sky all around us. Then it started in at seventy knots. It came in at thirty-five and built steadily to seventy. We were down to the, I guess, to the four or five, the smallest headsail before the storm jib, an' a several reefed main - about half a main up. An' we just sailed her all night under that rig. An' we sailed inshore an' we tacked. Most the guys got a little sick, a little scared I think, so we went off out to sea. And, ah, we went through the morning, an' we'd drowned the radio. It was swimming, so we didn't have to call in our morning sched, and we tried to dry it out by noontime, but that didn't work. An' the breeze just kept increasing all the time, so we went all through that day. An' then we tacked over about noontime and went inshore and we got in on the coast again. Didn't know where the hell we were. An' decided that we'd better, we were getting down to three helmsmen, an' it was soon after that - about three o'clock - that we dropped Pang on his head, so we decided that with just two of us driving, the only way to do it was to take one long leg out and one long leg in an' hope we'd be down around Tasman somewhere. So we went out, tacked over about midnight. Through the morning, we got the radio dried out, and Jackie Keough, who was Hood's loft manager down there - game as Ned Kelly this little guy - he didn't steer, he was a sail trimmer. I was complaining in the morning that we didn't have enough power 'cause we had about thirty foot seas, an' the number four wasn't enough to drive her over the top of these

seas. We got pooped a couple of times, we just got knocked down by the seas, so I said to . . . I called out a couple . . . I was the only one on deck. Nobody wanted to go up and change a headsail in this. The next thing, here's little Jack coming up an' he's got a lifejacket on. Well shit, at least we're getting a headsail change. He went up forward, and he changed from the number five to the number four by himself. He didn't mess around. Got the number four up and working. It was a little better, so I said, "We need the number three." So, he went below and dragged the number three up, by himself. No other basta'd would help, and I was at the wheel, so I really couldn't help him too much, but to crack the sheet. An' he changed it again. Got the number four down below, came out in the cockpit, sat down an' lit up a smoke an' says, "Fuck, I'm glad that's over!"

I said, "Yah, what's the story with the lifejacket? Why didn't you wear a safety harness?"

"Shit," he said, "I didn't want to get my head bashed in against the side of the hull."

I said, "Well, you could have swum around."

An' he says, "No, that's the other thing I've been meaning to tell you for the last two days: I can't swim."

Jack had spent half the night, he hadn't been to sleep, he was trying to make coffee for us. He'd taken all the bullshit out of the radio an' put it in the oven and put it all back together again, and the bloody thing worked. So, the morning sched came through, and Rumrunner had turned over an' lost all of the sails . . . kept the spar. But, they'd had a storm jib and trysail up an' just lost the lot, an' were motoring with half a diesel into Vishinian, which is just a bloody outcrop of rock. It's only just a bloody channel between a couple of rocks with a wharf on it. But, they went in there. I thought, "Fuck, they'd rolled over. They've got ten times as much experience as I have, an' . .

JS: Not enough fucking sail?

That's right. They just didn't have it an' that's when I was calling for sail, they didn't have enough an' kept getting bowled over. An' I figured then that maybe I was taught well enough.[82]

---

[82] 770713, David Kellett with John Scott.

The basic thrust of this story is that in certain circumstances it is better to carry more sail in heavy weather than less sail, but there are many other elements which are necessary for handling heavy winds. There was no way of knowing before the fact that such a large proportion of the crew would be seasick and that one of the crew members who could be counted on would break several ribs. The fact is that those who were still functioning had to use what resources they had left to deal with the problem.

There is no doubt that, at the end of this interview, David and I were each allowing the other to talk unguardedly about himself, so this is his honest assessment of what happened. Simply, he believes that he saved the boat, but that he could not have done it if Jack Keough had not been there when he was needed. The story does not dwell on the crippling seasickness of at least four unnamed crew members, nor does it spend undue time describing the conditions. The message is that newer, lighter boats require an active approach to gale force winds and that the older, experienced crew had trouble because they used older, established techniques; therefore, experience alone is not sufficient, and there must also be an element of instinctive adaptability to specific combinations of wind, wave and boat handling characteristics.

The second group of seamanship stories treats the stereotypes of seamen. The juxtaposition of two types in the following story expresses this point concisely:

> I think probably going up the Tagus in Wander Bird. Dead flat, blowing a catabatic gale down off the hills. That was a good one too, because we came in and anchored off Cascais, which you remember, and then we picked up two pilots, and one was the bar pilot, and the other was the river pilot. The bar pilot was a big, brass-bound fella who was just as happy as a lark to be on a sailboat, a- the river pilot was one of those skinny Portugees who just didn't think much of the whole thing. An' we started up the river, an' you get - as you remember, that breeze that falls down off the hills in the evening - an' we started up that river an' it was gettin' dark, an' it was of course flat, no possible sea. It was just a beam reach, an' Wander Bird was doing eleven knots. And the bar pilot, he was standing there saying the Portuguese equivalent of, "Hot dog!" an' the little guy was, "Oohh!" The little guy's saying, "Luff, Luff!" and the big guy's saying, "Hold her off!" And the Old Man, he was at the wheel, and he was having fun too. An' we went right up the middle. An' you get up just about to Lisboa an' the wind goes, "Thwump!" an' you anchor, with forty, fornicating fathoms. And that was fast.[83]

This narrative not only describes the two pilots and types each, but it also identifies the "Old Man", Captain Warwick M. Tompkins, with the robust, fearless bar pilot.

Two points about narrative style are also brought out in this story. Twice the teller brings the audience into the story with ". . . which you remember . . ." and ". . . as you remember . . ." Also, with the simple phrase, ". . . forty, fornicating fathoms," he reminds the listeners that

---

[83] 781121, Robert Scott.

he was, as Mate, responsible for bringing all forty fathoms back on board when they left Lisbon. A further insight lies in his choice of "Lisboa", the Portuguese spelling and pronunciation, rather than the English "Lisbon". As much as the overt attempts to bring the audience into the story, this usage states the commonality of experience in Portugal, shared thirty-five years apart by father and son.

Beyond his responsibility for the sailing systems of the boat, the professional also has to maintain the mechanic equipment. Again, this is a case in which the normal practice of the job does not warrant narrative comment, and stories are only told when something breaks or malfunctions:

> The classic example is when Ondine was doing the, ah, Sydney-Hobart Race. They were talking about the . . . they were unable to get the engine started, the batteries were dead. They were talking about how Tom Richardson, Tom the Pom, got the engine started. He had to get the engine started because of all the electronic equipment, refrigeration, and that stuff, an' so the technical, that was a good story, how he got it started, but it led into the technical idea that you can, in fact, start a diesel engine by - like a lawnmower - by pulling it. You know they took everything off the flywheel, wrapped a line around it, tightened that through a whole bunch of different blocks and finally led it to a drum, a winch drum. Continuous. Got four guys on the drum, started grinding that thing as fast as they could an' got it started. That was on the new Ondine, before it had been all chopped up, down in Sydney, Sydney Boat Works. In fact, he got Syd Brown so interested, he said, "You'll never get the thing started by doing that." Tom the Pom said, "Yes, I will." He got the whole thing set up, block and tackle, he pulled it all apart, and it got Sydie so interested that he finally got on the drum and started grinding and finally the thing kicked over. And then, Sydie,

> of all people, he figures, "Well, now we got the engine going, we've got to get all those flywheel belts on," so he tried to put it on with the engine going. He got a couple of them on, but . . .[84]

Because of the constrictions of space and weight, particularly on the racing boats, it is not always possible to carry enough spare parts, and examples of the resulting creativity range from Roger Grimes making a "snotter" to replace a spinnaker pole mast car[85] to Sven Joffs on Ondine designing an entire new rig for the boat after they lost most of the mainmast in the Indian Ocean, over a thousand miles from land.[86] Although only twenty-five percent of all the stories of seamanship can be considered serious, they certainly contain a measure of respect for the successful solution of these kinds of problems.

One story stands alone as a sub group because it is the only recorded example of the residual effects of long periods of coping with the challenges of seamanship. It demonstrates the way in which the subconscious mind is grappling with practical problems:

> I went to bed in Copenhagen in a goddamned room on about the fifth floor. The hotel was burned up the other day, killed about fifty people. The Hofstadder, Hoffmar or something. Anyway, it burned

---

[84] 781925, Chuck Wilson.

[85] 780324, Jeff Foster.

[86] 781114, John Scott.

up, burned everybody up in it. It had an inner courtyard. I turned in. All of a sudden about three o'clock in the morning, I jumped out of bed, an' I rushed over. Janie says, "What the hell are you doing?" "I'm trying to get the mainsail down. "Somehow, I'd gotten all screwed up in the Venetian blinds.[87]

The fifth sub-category includes stories about bad seamanship. They could well be placed among the stories of foolish behavior, except that they more often than not focus on the remedial action which must be taken to correct the error, rather than dwelling on the blunder itself:

> Did I ever tell you the one about Yankee Girl and that Circuit? '71, the same year off Miami. We turned the corner and we're going along, fifteen knots over the deck with the chute up. You guys were probably just about at the corner at that stage, or just past the corner.
>
> BB: In the Ft. Lauderdale Race? Ya.
>
> Oh, Christ, we're going along and I'm off watch, and as usual, we figured we had the good watch, so we're going along and we hear the radio going on the VHF 'cause it's saying, you know, Miami is saying, "Forty-five knots, northwest, in the squall." That was the year it blew hard.
>
> BB: Ya, it blew hard after we turned the corner.
>
> Ya, all right, well we were off Fowey Rocks when it started to blow hard. You were probably further down. So we got off there and we could hear the radio saying that it's blowing northwest. You know how much we lost that race by? A minute and a half. A minute and a half with a broken boat for a hour and a half.
>
> BB: Well, we beat ya.
>
> No, you were second, we were third. Eagle, we lost Eagle too. No, we were fourth. It was Eagle, you guys, Running Tide and ourselves. Running Tide beat us in the Circuit by beating us by one place on that fucking race. We had three seconds

---

[87] 781606, Horace Beck.

> and two fourths or something on the Circuit and lost by four points to Running Tide overall. We got off Miami, we can hear it on the radio, and you know how you wake up when you're supposed to be asleep, hearing things going on. We hear the radio, "Forty-five knots from the northwest." And we're going along in southwest breezes, and we could hear them on deck, "Ah, fuck, that looks like a big black cloud to me." Oh, Christ! Then Steere says, "Well, let's keep it up and see if we can't carry it through." And I guess we got the ounce and a half chute up. So, everybody down below, eight of us down below, get out of our bunks, pull on our pants, pull on our foul weather gear. We know what's gonna happen, and we were lined up at the fucking hatch, and nobody said a word to anybody else, not anybody, not a single word was said. We're lined up at the hatch. "Wham!' the boat went over. I came out of the companionway, I walked straight aft, I just pulled in what was left of the spinnaker, 'cause I knew it had blown out. The boat went right over on her ass. I pulled in, you know, a couple of threads. Kasnet, at this point, has gone the other way. He's putting up the double-head rig, 'cause he knew we'd need that, and I'm trying to get this fucking buck of tapes down behind us. Jesus Christ! But Steere, you know, all he said was, "Let's keep it up and see if we can't carry it through."[88]

It was probably not a bad decision which was made on deck, but it would have been smarter to listen to the radio and to be more prepared for the squall. This is easy to say, but there are always mitigating circumstances. It may simply have been late in the watch, and the watch captain may have felt his crew was too tired to set up for the double-head rig. In any case, it seemed obvious to those of us below that trouble was coming, and it was our near pantomime preparations in the silence below that is the point of the story.

---

[88] 780637, John Scott with Bill Bennett.

Even though there was no audience present for this narration, the fact that Bill Bennett chose to contradict my facts on the order of finish until we had placed the boats in the correct order makes another point about narrative style. Knowing that the provable facts are in proper order lends credence to the subjective opinions expressed in the remainder of the story. The use of contradiction as a narrative performance technique is discussed in chapter six.

The final section of stories on seamanship includes those which help keep perspective on the elements which affect one's perception of seamanship. Bill Bennett and the crew of Bay Bea were perhaps four hours behind us at the southern-most mark of the course described in the story above. In those four hours of running, we probably covered forty comfortable miles, while they had to beat after the wind shift, and they will remember that leg very differently than we will. The difference in perspective is made clear in this group of stories:

> I'm sure I've told you this one about Townie and me coming out of the Buzzards Bay entrance to the Cape Cod Canal. And it was blowing pretty fresh sou'west, and I've forgotten what boat we were in. It was rough and it was miserable. I was, you know me, I'm always ready to duck in somewhere. I'm a very trepid sailor. We were sort of bobbing out there, and I was thinking, "Oh, couldn't we dodge into," oh you know, "the place there." An' then, out from behind the point comes a Herreshoff 12' with a twelve-year-old sailing. He goes bobbing up and

> down. I looked at it. Townie looked at it, and we continued.[89]

Just as going down wind takes the curse out of strong winds, those sailing for fun will see conditions much differently that those making a delivery. I well remember being grateful when I was headed down the Chesapeake Bay at the start of a delivery to Bermuda, and the Skipper's Race fleet went by. We were cruising comfortably and fast with a mainsail and genoa, while the racing boats were on the very brink of control with spinnakers up. They also had a fifty mile beat to look forward to, starting some time around midnight, and we continued on down the bay well into the next day.

It is in the stories of navigation and life on board that one may see most clearly the sailor's perception of himself, not as it relates to those in other ways of life or other occupations but as he sees his relationship to his own work and the milieu in which he exists. And yet, even in these two categories combined, less than fifteen percent of the stories have a serious tone. It would seem, then, that the proper serious practice of his occupation forms only a small part of the professional sailor's narrative repertoire.

---

[89] 781102, Robert Scott.

General

This group of stories defies classification in any of the other topics, because those included are generally descriptive and do not have a strong plot or a major point to make. Eight of thirty stories occur in the first five of their respective recorded collections and during the period before any specific subject has been broached. Seven are specifically tied to the story immediately preceding them, and they are more descriptive additions to the other stories than they are narratives in their own right. Four deal with firsts, and they serve almost as a preamble to the other stories to be told by that teller. Five tell of the origins of nicknames.

The following is representative of the group in that it is primarily descriptive, it follows two other stories of firsts, and it is one of the first five stories told on the tape:

> . . . the first long distance run, over a hundred miles, was with Horry Godden, an' ah, it turned out we retired, you know I had a great record, we retired from the first long distance race I was ever in. It was a dead drift an' we did four miles in twenty-five hours, and ah, we got up off Pittwater where he lived, and he said, "Fuck it!" an' turned the iron on and in we went. Everybody finished up retiring from that race.[90]

[90] 770703, David Kellett.

The following is a good representative of the stories of nicknames:

> Great story about Louse. He was kind of a boyhood chum. We've been sailing Starboats since I was six and he was eight. We were sailing Starboats. His name is Billy Louise Campbell, Louise was his aunt's name or something, that they . . . So, Louise, Billy Louise, so Billy Louse, an' they finally fuckin' called him just plain Louse.[91]

Included in this category are stories which might be described as asides, in that they expand on non-sailing aspect of a previous story, such as fishing.

Although they are not a particularly interesting or cohesive group of stories in their own right or in the light of the stories from other categories, they become more intriguing when they are viewed as examples of solicitation, augmentation and confirmation. They are solicitation in that they eventually suggest a topic for further discussion. They may be seen as augmentation because they expand on the stories of others, and an element of confirmation lies in the way they affirm that the teller understands the circumstances described in the previous teller's story because he also has been in such circumstances.

The Unusual

Stories of unusual places, animals and events form the

---

[91] 780615, Bill Bennett.

sixth category. There are only twenty-eight stories, which might seem strange considering the foreign ports the group has visited and the opportunities they have had to witness the behavior of marine animals. Regardless of the country, however, the waterfront districts have a cosmopolitan flavor and are very similar, and the sailor always has the stabilizing element of his boat with its familiar surroundings. Marine animals, apparently, most often act in a normal fashion, if the stories of their unusual behavior are in their proper proportion. Of the eight stories which could be considered supernatural in nature, six are from one informant and one more is by another teller but is attributed to the first, and that informant is Horace Beck, who it is safe to say is more aware of the existence of supernatural lore and would have it more readily to mind than the other informants. There is another, or perhaps ancillary, interpretation of these statistics, and it is one which I believe is closer to the actual situation: I did not specifically request stories of supernatural events, because the thrust of the interviewing was toward the practical aspects of the occupation.

Sailors are very much attuned to the idea of luck affecting their lives, because no man is a weather master, and some people definitely experience better weather over the long run than others do. My father, for example, would never cruise at the same time or in the same place as his friend

E. A. Black, because the latter always experienced terrible weather when he cruised. After one cruise, Jeff Foster created what he called Foster's Rules of Cruising: "1) The wind is always on the nose for the delivery; 2) the number is always on the other side of the buoy; and, 3) you always drop the grill in over fifty feet of water." The absence of stories of luck and attendant superstitions is, therefore, most likely an accident of collecting rather than an indication that the group is innocent of such thoughts.

The stories of unusual places appear in two forms. Some merely describe the place and its characteristics, while others describe the results of visiting such places:

> Diego Garcia. Not only did I not get on the island, but I was asked to leave in eighteen hours. At the very bottom of the Chagos Archipelego. There were Japanese workers because they couldn't get any Americans to work out there. They wouldn't let us ashore, especially Patty. They deactivate, de-sexualize them for the eighteen months they're there. They gave us our fuel. They let a couple of us go ashore to the PX. We pulled bladders out behind the Zodiac. We had Double Diamond we'd bought in Greece, an' they gave us twelve cases of Budweiser. It was one of the few nights that it was okay with Bruce to get really drunk on the boat.[92]

The stories of unusual animals or of unusual behavior of normal animals fall in two sub-categories. The serious ones tell of dangerous or potentially dangerous or hostile

---

[92] 781914, Chuck Wilson.

behavior, while the humorous ones relate playful antics of the animals or amusing interpretations of animal behavior:

> And then we were coming up from Bermuda, an' a guy named Starkey was on watch, and he hollered out, "Wreck!" So I came up, and there were three sperm whales, asleep. It was rougher than a bitch, and they were pitching like destroyers. You know you could see under their jaw when, when they'd come out. And, ah, just a little way to leeward of them, or just a little to wind'ard of them, 'cause they had drifted down, and we were coming down on them, we ran into the remnants of a giant squid. And there were tentacles there, floating in the water. And I would think those tentacles were probably nine inches to a foot in diameter on the thick end, and probably twelve, fifteen feet long. And, it was obvius to me that this was just, you know, the fingernails of the damned thing. The body was gone, and, I'm sure that a large part of the tentacles was gone. What was left was twelve, fifteen feet long. I would think, thinking back, maybe ten inches in diameter.[93]

This account is typical of the stories of sighting unusual sea creatures, because it describes the first reaction of those on deck to identify the observed things as commonplace, then it gives the evidence which changes that analysis, and then it offers some speculation of the events which might have taken place.

The humorous stories usually center on one individual's lack of knowledge about the local fauna or his amusing interpretation of the reasons for their behavior:

> We had this bunch of kids aboard when we were taking Recluta up to Halifax, an' so fuckin' foggy you can't see, well you can't seee the goddamned bow

---

[93] 781609, Horace Beck.

> from the back end of the boat when you're steerin'. One of the kids said, "Ah," to Butch Ulmer, "ah, is there any goddamned, do you ever see any sea turtles?" Butch said, "No, there are no sea turtles up in this fuckin' area." 'Bout this time we almost hit one. Son of a bitch about this big around an' he fuckin' surfaced right next to the boat.[94]

The function of these stories about unusual places and animals is simply to show that the tellers have spent enough time off-shore to have seen their share of the oddities of the sea, and it is typical of these narrators that, having shown that they have the material in their repertoires, they would play down the significance by making light of the situations. This is certainly a case in which the context, most specifically the make-up of the audience, would have a direct effect on the tone of the story. Since I was the audience in the majority of recorded contexts, the point was not to amaze the uninitiated, but rather to demonstrate narrative competence on the given subject.

I have already discussed the statistical facts about the tales of unusual events, but I will include some examples here, because the fact that there are not recorded stories from other informants should not be taken to mean that they do not know and tell such stories:

> When I was in Mahone Bay, I saw the Teazer glow. . . . no question about that. I don't know whether it was the Teazer but I saw a pink glow in the fog,

---

[94] 780656, Bill Bennett.

> and a fisherman said, "Oh, that's the Teazer. You won't go out of here tonight." Sure enough, by morning, it was blowing a living gale. I was there for three days.[95]

Although the narrator will not say definitely that what he saw was the phantom of the Young Teazer, nor does he say that he took any specific action as a result of the ominant, he does strongly imply that he believes the connection between the glow and the gale.[96]

The second example is less specific in the actual form of the belief:

> I'll never forget the fourth day of that race. Andy Burnes, Bunny's youngest son, youngest of five sons, said, "Jesus, at this rate, we're gonna be in Spain in what fourteen . . .
>
> BB: The middle of September?
>
> No, the first four days were good, we were moving then. He said, "At this rate we'll be in Spain in thirteen days, fourteen days or something." I said, "Oh fuck, I wish he hadn't said that." An' three hours later, the ounce and a half chute, which we - so it must have been blowing - we had the ounce and a half up at that point, it went under, the halyard broke and it went under the boat. We had a little hand sewing machine, and put two hundred, eighty-five linear feet of stitching in that sail, and carried it for another two days. But I was pissed. I really do . . . He came up an' said, "Oh boy!,

---

[95] 781614, Horace Beck. For more on the Teazer, see Beck's Folklore and the Sea (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), pp. 396-98 and Catherine Jolicoeur, Le Vaisseau Fantôme, Légende Étiologique (Quebec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1970).

[96] For more on levels of belief, see Lauri Honko, "Memorates and the Study of Folk Beliefs," Journal of the Folklore Institute, 1(1964), 5-19.

> everything's great," When God heard that, He didn't want it to be that way anymore.[97]

Although I do not really believe that Andy's comment caused the spinnaker halyard to break, the diminishing of the winds or the fact that it eventually took us twenty-one days to reach Spain, I cannot deny that I tightened severely when he made his statement.

The fact remains, however, that belief stories form a very small part of the collection. Again, this should not be taken to indicate an absence of belief among the group. What it does show is that the narrative tradition of the group generally exudes control or at least the ability to deal with those things which are beyond control.

Weather

The final category includes stories which are strictly about weather. Even though weather is a contributing, contextual factor in more than half of the stories in the recorded collection, only thirteen have no point other than to describe the weather, and all of these are about storms, with none at all about calms, *per se*. This is not surprising when considered in the light of the tone of the narratives as discussed above. It is out of character for a member of this group to state simple awe at the conditions without

---

[97] 0607, John Scott, with Bill Bennett.

also explaining the actions he took to deal with them. Furthermore, in narrative contexts, amazed descriptions of bad weather conditions leave one open for someone else to score points by topping them. The absence of stories about calms is most likely due to the advent and relative reliability of auxiliary engines, which reduces calms to annoyances during races rather than life threatening situations.

As the examples show, even in the worst of cases, it is possible to see humor in the circumstances:

> The only one that I really always tell is this in 1963, down in Erie, Pennsylvania, sailing Starboats. And we started out a race with it blowing eighteen knots. The front had come through, they held the race off, blowing eighteen knots out of the north, so they sent us off in the fucking race. We had to win the race. If we did not win the race, we couldn't go in the Worlds Championship which was going to be held in Chicago, our home port. We finished the race in sixty knots of wind, and we were the only fucking ones that finished. They all dropped out somewhere along the road. It was the wildest fucking ride I've ever had in a goddamned boat in my whole life, and we were so goddamned intense in doing it, no life jackets, and at that time I had three pair of sweatpants on and a big wool shirt, and I'm hanging over the fucking side going up wind and I gotta weigh . . . I could just barely haul myself up into the fucking boat, and we were just so fucking intent on winning this goddamned thing, and I'm going down wind.
>
> JS: You didn't even realize nobody else was sailing the goddamned race?
>
> We hit a fucking wave and we were going so fast that it blew the fucking wooden splash rails right off the goddamned boat. Just actually disintegrated and then went, "Phoom!", flying past us. We gotta win this one, right? You didn't even know there wasn't anybody behind you. We had a mast that we kept hanging with like forty-six pounds, which was like twice the weight. We busted our light-

> weight mast before we got this heavy mast in, and it was like thirty-five fucking feet above the deck, forty-six pounds, and this was a heavy one. We were sailing with a twenty-eight pounder. And this is the only thing, ya know, this fucking mast just wouldn't fall down, and she just wasn't gonna fall down. No fuckin' way! At that time, they lost two guys that went down, their Starboat sunk. And the reason that they called the race off, they couldn't get to us to tell us this 'cause we were going back up to the weather mark one more time and then running down, and they couldn't tell us this because the goddamned committee boat couldn't get out to us. Both of the guys, a man and his son, drowned because they got caught in the rigging and couldn't get off the boat. And that is about the only story that I've really fucking told. That was the wildest goddamned, you know, I've been a lot of places, doing a lot of things in the big leagues, but I've never fucking seen anything like that before, and I don't think we'll ever do 'er again. That was a good one.[98]

Bill Bennett says quite succinctly that this is his only story about pure weather, and the aspects which describe the severity of the weather are the death of two sailors, the calling off of the race and the fact that the committee boat, even with an engine, could not get to them to tell them to quit. The loss of the wooden splash rails also amplifies the force of the gale. It is interesting that his one pure weather story takes place on Lake Erie on a small, one-design boat, not in the "big leagues". This would seem to obviate subsequent stories about the ocean and ocean racing boats. There is no humor in this story. Only respect for the conditions comes through.

---

[98] 780634, Bill Bennett, with John Scott.

It seems impossible to keep humor out of even the worst of subjects. For example, Douglas Byors who was a shipmate on my first trans-Atlantic trip often told of being caught in Hurricane Carol. Everyone in New England knows the damage the storm caused and its severity, so description is not really necessary. Mr. Byors tells of a wave breaking the mizzen mast and what they had to do to clear away the wreckage, but his account focuses on their returning below and finding one of the crew sitting on the cabin sole, eating chocolate-chip cookies and drinking bourbon straight from the bottle, saying, "If I'm going to die soon, I'm going to do my two favorite things first."[98]

Similarly:

> Well, I was going down to Bermuda one summer, in Tilly Twin, I had just built her. She was tougher than a cod, ya know. It got pretty dusty out there. Christ! The masts were coming down and the Maydays were going up, an' finally we hove her to, 'bout two o'clock in the morning, and didn't she jump! She jumped this way, and she jumped that way. We had one guy on board, that I later came to despise, he said, "Ah, you know boys," he said, "I was in the initial assault at Salerno." He said, "I was in the initial assault at Anzio." An' he said, "I was at Omaha Beach with the first wave." But he said, "Boys, I'm gonna tell you something: If I see the light of day tomorrow morning, I'll turn Catholic!"[99]

---

[98] From memory of Doug Byors' rendition in June, 1967.

[99] 781604, Horace Beck.

The content of the professional sailor's personal narratives, in general, demonstrates his confidence in his ability to live with the circumstances of his life, and the predominant humorous tone must grow out of that confidence. That he also assumes this kind of occupational competence in his fellow group members is shown by the dearth of stories about the practical, everyday aspects of his work. Category Five, which includes stories of a general nature, is the only one in which the narratives do not emphasize the unusual or extraordinary. All other cases tell of those who surpass the norm or of those who fall short of it. By default, then the contents of the collected stories define the expected attributes of the members of the group.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENRES

Of the one hundred forty-one stories mentioned earlier, one hundred twelve were definitely humorous in tone. As such, they are anecdotes under Dégh's definition.[100] To Thompson, jest, humorous anecdote, merry tale and Schwank are interchangeable.[101] Brunvand's anecdote is a "short personal

---

[100]Linda Dégh, "Folk Narrative," in Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 70.

[101]Thompson, p. 10.

legend."[102] Dégh goes on to say that the anecdote "As a brief and funny experience story . . . resembles a Schwank not fully developed; indeed, it can be viewed as a Schwank-episode."[103] Clearer distinctions than these may certainly be suggested, although I agree with Dégh that the personal experience narrative is the stuff of which jokes are made.

The major difference between personal experience narratives and jokes is their treatment of reality. The former are believed to be true by the teller, and the latter are known to be fictitious. Many jokes announce their unreality immediately with opening formulae such as "Did you hear the one about . . ." or "This guy walks into a bar . . ." Another passive announcement that a given story is a joke is the simple fact that it is told in a joke session rather than a storytelling session. I have been amazed that no more jokes appear in recordings or storytelling sessions, but given the differing concepts of reality, this should not be surprising. Joke tellers and audiences are aware that they are suspending reality in a session, and are prepared to accept everything from giant phalluses to scenes enacted at the gates of Heaven. In an exchange of personal experiences, there is no willingness to suspend reality.

---

[102] Jan Harold Brunvand, The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1968) p. 94.

[103] Dégh, p. 70.

With the exception of the reference to the story of Jacques the Bridge Builder, the only joke I recorded was the one of the drunk throwing up on his dog which Roger Grimes told during the session presented above.[104] What is interesting here is that Roger could have turned that joke into a personal experience very easily and it would have been believed! If he had said, "I walked into the Ship Inn one evening and found Logan had been there all day. Wingnut was there next to him with his dog at his feet, and next thing you know Logo throws up all over the dog. He looks down and says, 'Fuck, I don't even remember eating that.'" Those of us who had raced in Australia the previous year would have known the place and the characters and we would have believed the story.

Sailors have traditionally taken great pleasure in shocking the value systems of those who live ashore. Driving cars into the water, hiring chain gangs to sit on the boom, tip the boat and proceed under low bridges and stealing a horse, swimming it out to the boat and hitching it to the stern and going to bed all show a suspension of the norm if not of reality, yet they are all true incidents, and stories of them are in circulation. Compare the following to the dog story which Grimes told as a joke:

> Like Dexter Rush, ya know, they called him "Duckster" for years. When they first started the

---

[104] 77/5/2/145.

> fiesta, Dexter had this goddamned pet duck on a leash, and he went up and down Palafox Street stopping at all the bars, an' he and the duck got drunk as haints, kept . . . they called the police on him, because he kept going into bars, an' he'd bring this duck and put it on the bar, order a drink, got obnoxious as hell - he's an inordinately obnoxious man - he does that without even tryin' - but the problem was that every time they put the duck on the bar, the damn duck would shit all over . . . they ran a newspaper article on it. They put 'em both in jail, an' let the duck out on bond.[105]

At the first Festival of the Five Flags in Pensacola, Florida, there was apparently an aura of civic play. It was play of the kind that Caillois describes as "Mimicry" which involves "a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life."[106] This story has the same suspension of reality that jokes exhibit, but the reality was suspended in the actions of the characters.

Personal experience narratives and jokes also derive their humor from the same soufces. Another joke current among this crew was the following:

> A little girl was walking her dog one day when she was stopped by an old lady. "Goodness, that's a pretty dress you're wearing."
> "Thank you, Ma'am."
> "And what a pretty ribbon in your hair."
> "Thank you, Ma'am."
> "And what a cute doggie."
> "Thank you, Ma'am."

---

[105] 77/1/1/120.

[106] Roger Caillois, Man, Play, and Games (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962), p. 10.

"And isn't that cute, the doggie has the same ribbon you have."
"Thank you, Ma'am."
"And what do you call your little doggie?"
"Call him Porky, Ma'am."
"Porky? Why do you call him Porky?"
"Because he likes to fuck pigs, Ma'am."[107]

The humor in this joke is based on the same thing as the humor in the story of the little Portuguese boy who called me a "Touriste!": a child behaves unlike a child.

As one final example of how close humorous personal experience narratives come to jokes is a story told by my brother. He relates how, when trying to dock at the Edgartown Yacht Club Dock one day, he made a mistake and hit the dock so hard that he knocked the Commodore off the toilet on the third floor. He makes a very good story of it and told it once to several people at Jeff Foster's house. On hearing about how angry the Commodore was, Steve Haesche said, "No wonder he was mad, it's the only shit he took all year." By stereotyping the Commodore, Steve put the personal experience story on an absurd level and thus made it a joke.[108]

While the latter story can become indistinguishable from a joke by the addition of a single line, it is a technique in many jokes to make the story appear to be a personal ex-

---

[107]From memory.

[108]From memory.

perience as long as possible. The more believable the beginning of the story, the more punch there will be in the punch line. Using familiar persons and places can postpone the realization that a story is a joke even longer, because such usage confuses the audience's perception of reality.

This, then, is the gist of the difference between personal experience narratives and jokes: the former exist in a real, if sometimes bizarre world, while jokes demand a suspension of reality. The ease with which a single story may move between these genres, either through a twist of a narrative's reality or a personalizing of a traditional joke motif, is a topic for another study, although more will be said on the subject in the performance chapter.

For very similar reasons, one may distinguish the personal experience narrative from the tall tale. There is hyperbole used by the tellers of personal narratives, but that hyperbole is not the point of the story. It is used simply to attract the attention of listeners in specific contexts, so that one may tell an essentially true story. Ten foot waves can create very unpleasant conditions on a boat, but to the uninitiated, they simply do not sound very big. If the point of the story revolves around the unpleasantness of the situation created by the waves, the size used by the teller will conform to the expectations of his

audience enough to carry that point across.

The writing of history demands perspective. There are some events whose importance is felt immediately, such as the assassination of Anwar Sadat, but the full significance of that event cannot be known for years. One cannot know either what the course of history would have been had the event not taken place. There are, then, scores of events duly reported and filed away whose significance is not yet known. When something happens to point out the significance of such events, they are duly recalled.

In the world of personal experience narratives, it is often the death of an individual which gives significance to the stories about him, and they are brought out in obituaries, eulogies and the conversations at wakes and funerals. Other frameworks for oral history can also bring narratives of personal history, or memorats[109], to light, and there are instances in which the evidence of oral history may conflict with the pronouncements of popular or official history.[110]

---

[109]Herbert Halpert, "Definition and Variation in Folk Legend," in American Folk Legend: A Symposium, ed. Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: Univ. of California Press, 1971), pp. 52-53.

[110]See John R. Scott, "'I Don't Think There's Anything in the World that the Common Man Will Take a Bigger Chance [for] Than He'll Take for a Seal.': Some Contributions of Oral History Toward an Understanding of the Newfoundland disaster," in Folklore and Oral History, Papers from the Second Annual Meeting of the Canadian Aural/Oral History Association, 3-5 Oct. 1975, ed. Neil V. Rosenberg (St. John's, Newfoundland: memorial Univ. of Newfoundland, 1978), pp. 81-90.

CONCLUSION

Personal experience narratives, whether seen as nascent Schwank or as memorates or as both, exist in their several forms within folk groups. What distinguishes them most from other forms is that they may come into being immediately after the event occurs and have neither stood the test of time nor had the opportunity to gather the trappings of more established forms. It is, however, this immediacy which makes personal experience narratives valuable in the study of communication and performance. The steps a story takes on its way to becoming traditional and its final form at performance may be seen and analyzed in a way not possible with more established forms or with material which has been in tradition longer.

The next two chapters discuss the personal experience narrative as communication and as performance.

CHAPTER FIVE - PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES AS COMMUNICATIVE DEVICES

INTRODUCTION

After describing the personal experience narrative and before discussing the performance of these narratives, I will investigate the processes by which a personal experience becomes a narrative, examine the importance of the personal aspect of the narratives and how this affects a given story's longevity.

The communicative stage of the narratives, including creation and dissemination, may actually be viewed as passive performance. An individual's actions, what he reports, what he chooses to repeat and what he selects in given circumstances all communicate something about that person quite different from what might be termed his stage presence, the subject of the next chapter. Hymes's "breakthrough into full performance" may well be seen as a shift from covert to overt performance.[111] Significantly, at each stage of creation, there is the potential for such a breakthrough. A burst of creative inspiration at any stage of the development can ensure that the final narrative will have an opportunity to

---

[111] See Dell Hymes, "Breakthrough into Performance," in Folklore: Performance and Communication, Approaches to Semiotics, No. 40, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 11-74.

endure in the tradition and become part of the material of overt performance.

The creative stages described below are activity, reporting, repeating and selection. The selective stage of creation leads then to the concept of repertoire control which determines the longevity and dissemination of a given story. It is throughout these stages that the individual story's ability to survive in tradition is first assessed and then ensured. If a particular event is of collective interest, it must still be made to exist in a form which will allow continuity in transmission.[112]

CREATION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES

Narratives are born in a series of creative processes. They do not simply leap into being with the help of a mystical force, and if there is a progression of creative acts, these must certainly be identifiable and plottable as steps in the progression. Naturally, any series thus identified will be confused by examples in which it seems that a narrative comes first as a guide for actions or by instances in which a breakthrough comes at an early stage and the event becomes overt performance before all of the steps have been taken. In

---

[112] See Sandra K. D. Stahl, "The Personal Experience Narrative as Folklore," Journal of the Folklore Institute, 14 (1977), 15, for a discussion of continuity and collectivity as the two interrelated aspects of tradition.

general, however, a personal experience narrative which becomes a working part of an individual's repertoire will follow these steps in its creation: an action or a series of actions takes place; these actions are remembered and reported by one or more of the actors; the reports are repeated and embellished by the need to create the mood for listeners who were not present at the event; and, the narrative becomes a selectable part of somebody's working repertoire.

For a narrative to be appropriate in a full performance situation, the action or actions it relates must be in some way noteworthy. In a situation where everyone acts normally and predictably, there may be no performable narrative generated, only one which will take its place in the world of phatic communion.[113] Thus the creative progression which eventually produces a performable personal experience narrative begins in the action stage, and its progress depends on there being something unusual in the behavior of the person or persons involved.

---

[113] In Dell Hymes, "The Ethnography of Speaking," in Anthropology and Human Behavior, ed. T. Gladwin and W.C. Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: The Anthropological Society of Washington, 1962), pp. 15-53, the author expands on Malinowski's concept of phatic communion.

Actions

Sailors' stories fall into one of two definite categories. These are stories of events at sea or those of interaction with society ashore. Off shore, any extreme of weather may be sufficient for a story of the events to be repeatable. Most of the stories retold about interaction with the shore are based on the fact that sailors traditionally break the norms of shoreside society, and the difference between life at sea and that ashore probably accounts for the fact that a sailor's outrageous behavior may be entirely unintentional.

An Australian friend of mine spent a night in a New Zealand hotel after a particularly arduous race from Tasmania. He went to his room, turned on the bath and lay down to wait for the tub to fill. As soon as he lay down, he fell asleep and awakened by the pounding on the door to his room. He got up and waded over to the door, told the manager to stop his racket, slammed the door in the manager's face and turned back to the room. He then realized that the room was flooded by the overflowing of the tub and turned off the water. The next morning, he bought a paper before boarding the plane back to Australia, and he describes the reading of the headline, "It said, 'Yachtsman runs amuck!', and would you know, it was me."[114]

---

[114]From memory.

The fact is, however, that more often the sailor's abuse of the conventions ashore is quite intentional and stands as an almost perpetual practical joke.[115] While intentional on the surface, the joking attitude derives from several levels of volition. In the first place, sailors are continually visiting strange or foreign ports where they are simply not aware of what the normal standards of behavior are. Thus they very often find themselves breaking norms unintentionally and unconsciously. One obvious and surface manifestation of this is that the sailor is almost never properly dressed for the codes ashore. His wardrobe is for the most part functional as opposed to decorative. The single blue blazer (probably adorned with a regatta patch) serves as ceremonial dress for any and all functions, socks are generally out of the question and the ever-present sailing shoes usually show evidence of the trials they have endured.

The sailor not only finds himself in strange places regularly, but is also in a given place usually for a very short time. He often has two or three days to accomplish those things relating to alcohol and courtship which landsmen can achieve with patience and moderation over any length of time.

---

[115] See Tallman.

Furthermore, the sailor newly come ashore has just completed a period of strict regimen and self-denial. These factors are, of course, relative to the duration of the preceding voyage, but the sailor who is offshore on a regular basis comes to believe that his entire life is one of regimen and self-denial and that any sojourn ashore should repay him for the denials and prepare him for return to the regimen.

Finally, because he has been master of the elements and cheated death again on another voyage offshore, the sailor when on land has an attitude which can only be described as "rollicking". Why, he thinks, should he abide by rules made by people who have never survived the things he has survived and who could never even understand the perils he endures. Thus, in total, we have the sailor who is a stranger and does not know the rules, does not have the time to learn them and simply does not care if he breaks them.

The following story demonstrates this frame of mind, and actually takes it a step further, for two reasons: the scene of dinner was an especially stuffy club in an especially stuffy town, Cowes, Isle of Wight, England; and those involved had just formed the make-up crew of the boat which had won the day's race. Rollicky antics are especially funny if codes to be broken are bombastic, and the winning crew in any race deems itself to have special license in attacking the pompous.

Two boats of the U.S. Admiral's Cup team, Scaramouche and Bay Bea, were already in Cowes before the series started, and there was a day race against a lot of the boats which would be the competition later. There were also a lot of American sailors in Cowes, waiting for the Admiral's Cup or just taking time off, so we put together a crew for Bay Bea for the day race.

We won the race and met on Scaramouche for cocktails afterwards. After several drinks, we went to the Island Sailing Club for dinner, with Shuff acting as host. Most of us were dressed in clothes which showed the fact that they had just weathered a trip across the Atlantic. Shortly after we were seated, right among several tables full of very well-dressed locals, Y'all, who was there for the start of the Whitbread Around the World Race and who was reputed to have received his education at an Alabama reform school, stood up and sang a rendition of "I'm a Redneck". The title is all I can remember of the song and may be all there was to it, except for a liberal dose of words which are not often heard in the Island Sailing Club and apparently had never been heard in such volume.

The strains of "I'm a Redneck" continued through dinner, and by the time we had finished the neighboring tables had either cleared or were peopled by some very uncomfortable looking folks. The waitress asked Chuckie if he was done with his plate, on which there was a well-cleaned ear of corn. He said, "Not quite," and took the ear and bit it in half. Before we really had time to realize that he was gone, Mitch came back with the commandeered pastry cart, followed closely by its former proprietor who was summarily dismissed. While our attention was on the discomfort of the pastry person, Y'all slipped away behind the bar and returned to the table with a fresh bottle of Napoleon Brandy and the necessary snifters. The bartender either did not know that he had taken the bottle or chose to ignore it, because he made no comment whatever and it never appeared on the bill although it was dispatched instantly.

On leaving the Island Sailing Club, to their extreme joy, we split up. Y'all and Hall went to a pool hall. Chuckie and Shuff headed for a dance hall. Mitch disappeared, and Nut and I headed back to the boatyard for some quiet drinks. We were successful in finding the drinks if not the

> quiet, and found ourselves in a near brawl on a boat where a Scotsman was playing the bagpipes. As nearly as I can remember, the fight almost developed between those who wanted the piper to continue and those who insisted that he stop. Mitch spent the entire night (so he says) trying to find his way home. After an argument with the owner of the pool hall as to whether he had the right to close at the legal closing time and deprive them of winning still more beers from the locals, Hall and Y'all went to the dance hall looking for Shuff and Chuckie. When they could not find them, Y'all went home and Hall headed back to Scaramouche. As he walked out the dock towards the boat, he passed Chuckie, virtually skipping back towards the shore, chanting, "I'm gonna get laid, I'm gonna get laid." Hall went back on board and identified the half drink he had left when we went to dinner. He decided to finish it, so he needed some ice to cool it again. In his present state, he was not very good with the icepick and could only manage to cut a piece which was twice the size of the glass, but he put that piece on top of the drink and every time he wanted a sip, he simply held the chunk of ice in one hand and drank with the other, putting them back together each time he finished.[116]

A large portion of the evening's activities were perfectly typical of the group's normal behavior. Extended cocktail hours, dinners in fancy clubs or restaurants and various forms of after-dinner recreation are all standard procedure. For this group, it is not even unusual to follow these normal procedures in a foreign port. What does make this particular night memorable are the specific creative actions of specific individuals.

It is not important to try to understand why Y'all would feel compelled to sing "I'm a Redneck" in the dining room of

---

[116]From handwritten notes, made the following day.

the Island Sailing Club, why Mitch would commandeer a pastry cart or why I would get in a fight with a bagpiper. What is important is that these actions in some fashion set the evening apart from other evenings. The sum of these doings, along with the responses to them by the other group members, communicates the group's self-definition to those around them. By listening, smiling and laughing and particularly by doing nothing to stop him, we all participated in the singing. The individual actions were characteristic of the specific person, who communicated something about himself both to the group and to the strangers.

Had the group sat quietly, kept within itself and only discussed the day's racing, there would not have been anything in the events of the evening that would have been worthy of communicating later. Thus, it seems that one communicative act, once performed, becomes the basis for further communication. By telling the story of the confiscation of the pastry cart, for example, the teller imparts something of the actor's character. By the way he tells it, either with amusement or scorn, the teller then also communicates something about himself.

From this point of view, the final story of the evening is especially telling. Hall was alone when he drank his drink with the oversized ice cube sitting on top of it. The fact that he chose to report that incident to the rest of us

shows that he felt the action to be typical of his behavior. The action and the reporting of it were something that he wished to communicate and had to report because nobody was there to witness or to translate the action itself. If, then, the actions cannot speak for themselves, the reports of the actions must do the communicating and the interpreting at one time.

Reporting

The next stage in the creation of a narrative is the reporting stage, which still takes place even in cases in which the actions are witnessed and interpreted by others. It is, in effect, a period of grace between the actions and the actual narrative about the actions, and during this period the collective memory of the group is scoured for motifs which will constitute either the cores of full narratives or the contextual background material to flesh out those narratives. During this interval, only speaking competence is required of any reporter, and all contributions are welcome and are added to the reservoir from which narrative motifs and background details can be drawn.

In such a report of an event or events, the speakers and the audience are still close enough to the time and location of the event to be able to speak in an esoteric shorthand. Most of the characters are still in attendance

and need not be described. The location is still fresh in all memories and need not be depicted, and the general atmosphere most likely still exists and does not need to be characterized.

Even for those who were actually in attendance at the events, the reporting stage is necessary because of the different perspective available to specific individuals during the proceedings. Anyone may simply miss a particular action because of distraction or because of his physical condition.

This is also a period of grace in terms of modesty. Each reporter is not only allowed to speak of his own thoughts and actions without fear of being though egotistical, but he is actually encouraged to relate these details. Only in this atmosphere can all of the details of the occurrence expect to be presented for use by the eventual portrayers of the event.

During this stage, there is creativity on two levels. First, each individual has to select what he is to report, and there is some creativity in the way he presents his reports, even at this early stage. Secondly, it is at this time that the storyteller begins the creative selection process which will eventually determine which portions of the material he will keep, polish and repeat.

The morning following the evening described above, I awoke on Bay Bea, and Bill Bennett and I went over to Scaramouche for coffee. Another of the Bay Bea crew joined us, and since he had not been with us the night before, he had to be filled in on the details of what had happened. After that, another of the actors arrived, and we went through everything again with his added comments. When Chuck Wilson arrived, we would have gone through the entire story again, including our agreed-on prank that we would tell him that his regular girl friend had arrived and was looking for him, but we had to go sailing because Herman Frers, the designer of Scaramouche, arrived and wanted to do some practicing. Just as we were leaving the dock, Y'all arrived and joined us, which meant another rendition of the previous night's events. Bay Bea left at the same time, and the boats powered out of the harbor side by side. Some of her crew also needed to be filled in, so some of the stories were shouted between the boats.

This final recounting signaled a slight change from the pure reporting stage because new forces began to work on the reports. First, there was a need to alter the material so that it could be passed between the two boats effectively. This meant that descriptions of the events had to be tightened stylistically. Secondly, with Herman Frers and the owner of a South American boat aboard, it was no longer a matter of

passing details around among the esoteric group. Thus, some heretofore unnecessary background had to be added for their benefit, and some selection of incidents began to take place. Tightening of style, adding of background details and culling of the material combine to signal that the period of grace is over and that the narratives must now survive in a critical atmosphere.

It is an interesting element of narratives to note the duration of the reporting period. In the example presented here, events were moving very quickly. The racing was to begin in earnest in a couple of days, so there was the need to practice. Also, the individuals would all return to their separate boats, and some of the cohesiveness of this group would be lost. Had this evening's events taken place after the racihg was over, the future of the stories would have been different, but as it was there were many other activities to divert the attention and narrative creativity of the group members. The last time I saw Chuck Wilson these incidents were not mentioned, but when the topic of outrageous behavior ashore came up, we concentrated on a series of events which took place about five months earlier in Florida.

On that evening in Ft. Lauderdale, a group of thirty-two of us decided to celebrate Chuck's birthday at a local restaurant. Someone suggested the Rustic Crab, because the latter served pitchers of beer, and they provided no utensils

with which to eat. The atmosphere would thus be conducive to creative forms of play. I made the reservation in the name of "Mr. Kahlbetzer", an Australian boat owner who was, presumably, in Australia at the time.

We arrived in several van loads and were told that our table was not yet ready, but they asked if we would mind waiting in the bar. One member of the group, the hijacker of the pastry cart in Cowes, had already had too much to drink, was dressed in a pair of Mickey Mouse ears left over from his daughter's recent visit to Disneyland, and proceeded to introduce himself to all the other patrons of the bar. It was suggested to one female member of the party that, since it was Chuck's birthday, she should "Show him your tits!" which she promptly did, to the almost terminal delight of two older gentlemen across the bar.

Several "compulsory" drinks were ordered and drunk roughly in unison. After one of these, several of us noticed the barmaid sitting down at a small table near the bar. The owner or manager went to her and asked what she was doing. She replied, "I quit, but since I get my dinner for free, I'm going to eat before I leave."

By this time, the management realized that their best course of action was to get rid of us as fast as they could, so they found three tables for ten immediately, instead of waiting for the table for thirty-two to be ready. On the

basis of this and the fact that he had shut us off at the bar, the manager was able to convince the barmaid to return to work. I stayed at the bar and asked the rejuvenated girl, "Who the Hell were those people?" She answered that she did not know and brought me another drink. Just as she brought it, someone yelled through the door from the dining room for me to join the group. Clearly, looks cannot kill.

When I sat down, I noticed a pleasant looking old couple sitting alone at the next table. At that moment, she was watching in amazement as the guest of honor drank an entire pitcher of beer in one motion. By the end of the evening, we had joined their table to ours, paid for their dinner and watched her lead him out the door. When he went, he was wearing the plastic bread basket on his head and had his final mug of beer in his hand.

When chugging yet another pitcher of beer, Chuck went straight over backwards in his chair, and his girlfriend decided that he should go out to the van for a rest. I went out shortly thereafter to see if he was all right, and using a clear, sober voice, he convinced me that he was mostly acting and that he should go back in for more food. As soon as we went in through the door, he resumed his outrageous and drunken behavior. We found that we had missed a food fight of monumental proportions. One of Mitch's crew had convinced a third party to attack Mitch with a bowl

of cocktail sauce, and apparently everyone had quickly become involved.

We left shortly afterwards, and the occupants of one car decided that they needed more drinks and went to Chuck's Steak House, a favorite local haunt. I was in charge of Mitch, Mickey Mouse ears and all, and did not want either of us to be barred from Chuck's, so we went to another bar which we would not mind being thrown out of. Another group went back to the boats to continue the party there. We found out the next morning that the group from Chuck's Steak House had found another sailor's MG parked nearby, had lifted it up and placed it on the sidewalk in front of Eckhardt's Drugstore in such a way that it had only a couple inches clearance in front and in back. I went back to my boat to sleep, leaving Mitch in the van, which he seemed to prefer at the time.[117]

Beyond the obvious fact that there were more people involved in this event and thus there were more actions and more reporting perspectives, the time in the sailing year had an effect on the future of the stories about this evening. The Southern Ocean Racing Conference had just ended in early March, and most of the boats waited for at least the middle of April to head north, so this was a period of relative

---

[117] From memory, notes and tape 77/12.

inactivity. A few boats engaged in major refits in preparation for trips to Europe, but for most skippers there was a good deal of recreational time. Also, that year there was only one marina which was well suited to the racing boats, so we were all together, and nearly every activity was done on a group basis. Finally, Ft. Lauderdale after the end of the Southern Circuit is a good place for sailors to find work or at least to obtain a ride north for the summer season, and new people were arriving on a regular basis, each anxious to hear stories of recent adventures.

All of this combined to give the events of this particular night a long grace period. There were many opportunities for the stories to be told and retold, honed and polished. There was also no need to report the events to exoteric audiences, because even the owners were unlikely to visit the boats during this period. This was, then, a period during which the group was allowed to function largely within itself and did not need to make contact with the outside world except at its own volition.

In the case of long passages offshore, the reporting stage is often long enough for the descriptive narrative about an event to reach full literary style before it is ever performed. Sailors on long voyages often keep personal logs as a way of distinguishing among the many days which are essentially the same. The following is taken directly from

such a log which I kept on my first trans-Atlantic crossing. The owner and captain was a very tense individual who tended to overreact, and my watch mate and I joked about this on a regular basis. The incident described here took place on a night when there were small rain squalls all around us, and as George Welch and I went off watch, he felt that it would be appropriate if one of those squalls hit the other watch, so he performed a "rain dance" which included a chant.

> 7 July, 1967; THE GREAT SEA RESCUE or "YAHOO"
>
> Often at sea, the uncalled-for frivolities of an undisciplined crew can ignite in the mind of a great sea-faring man a chain-reaction of "thoughts", which lead to unnecessary stress on that already over-taxed "mind" which lies betwixt his ever-sensitive ears. Perhaps it is the far away memory of some heroic moment deep in his past which causes a sound to tear fang and claw at the highly tuned strings of his gruff, but tender, heart. . . . and perhaps not.
>
> Such was the case, 7 July, 1967. Amidst childish cries of, "Eat your livers, you bastards!", the slovenly after-watch had grovelled its way to undeserved rest in bunks kept warm by the sleepless tossing and turning of the constantly vigilant captain. Oh now, how could that unwitting scum be so heartless as to callously cry, "Yahoo!"? Perhaps he was unaware of what such a sound could mean to the hyper-sensitive ear of a great man of the sea. . . . and perhaps not.
>
> Instantly, into the mind of the captain, leapt the image of a man, heartlessly hurled beyond hope by the hoary hand of heaven, helplessly into a holocaust of wind and wave. He voiced his fears to the cook who observed informatively, "I thought it was just a wave I saw breaking but perhaps." . . . and perhaps not.
>
> Without hesitation, the captain called the scum on deck and, holding him in the grasp of a soul-searching gaze, asked, "Did you cruelly and heartlessly utter the "Yahoo" which sent leaping into my mind the image of a man, heartlessly hurled beyond

> hope by the hoary hand of heaven, helplessly into a holocaust of wind and wave?" The earth-pig of the afterwatch haltingly answered, "Yes", and skulked back to bed, perhaps realizing more of the strains and pressures which beset a captain at sea. . . . and perhaps not.[118]

This is clearly an overt attempt at literary satire and is a far more ornate treatment than that given most stories of events on an ocean passage. Compare this log entry with the story of the same event as it appears eleven years later in my taped conversation with Horace Beck. This version appears on page 111, and it provides a graphic demonstration of the ways in which story material can change as a result of time, context and function. It does show, however, the amount of thought which can be given to how one wants to present his descriptions of particular events. There is a great deal of time at sea when one is alone with his thoughts, particularly on one-man watches. Since others are sleeping, a certain degree of quiet must be maintained. This and the need to conserve the ship's batteries prevent the use of any stereo equipment. Small batteries to power radios or tape recorders cannot be carried in sufficient quantity to allow indiscriminate use, and they also must be conserved for use in battery-powered navigational instruments, such as radio direction finders. The need for constant attention to wind,

---

[118] From a collection of my personal logs of sailing passages.

waves and the compass makes it impossible to read. Deprived of all of these diversions, one must resort to one's thoughts and some of these certainly will involve the events of the recent days.

With the exception of the process of writing a log, I am not conscious of actually organizing my thoughts during such times alone with the aim of perfecting the narratives which will arise from the events of the trip, but in thinking back over certain circumstances at these times, one certainly organizes the thoughts. They will be sorted with reference to time, place, characters and situations and filed away for recall when conversational keys indicate. Neither my informants nor I have been able to articulate to what extent they are aware of the future narrative value of events as they are taking place. Most have, however, been aware that they place themselves in situations which are likely to generate good narratives.

Whether or not the thought process is consciously aimed at the production of a narrative, it still serves that purpose through the organizing, repeating and selecting of those thoughts which will eventually become the narratives. Also during this thought process, one sees the humor in the events that did happen, and one also sees the humor in the things that could have happened in those given circumstances. In the Cowes instance, we had talked about the possibility of

telling Chuck that his girlfriend had arrived to see him while he was out with a local girl. She had not arrived, and it was too hectic that morning to perpetrate the prank, but these facts do not prevent the prank from becoming part of the story.

It was suggested earlier that one kind of creativity which occurs during the reporting stage is creativity of selection, the choosing of those motifs which will later carry the narrative.[119] As well as selecting those portions of the material he will keep, polish and repeat, the story-teller will, at this time, conceive of elements which could be added to the actual events. When the material is chosen and polished for performance, the performer must believe in it and stand behind it, but during the respite of the reporting period he may still look at his raw material with a critical eye, deciding what to keep, what to discard and what to add.

Additions to these incipient narratives are similar to augmentations to perfected narratives.[120] In each case the annexed element should be fully appropriate to be added, and once added it should enhance the contextual appropriateness of the resulting narrative.

---

[119] See p. 186.

[120] See Chapter Four, p. 91 and Chapter Six.

The reporting stage is very much conspiratorial. Each member of a laughing and chatting throng decides for himself and contributes to a group consensus on what should be included in later, stylized reports of the events. He may also be called on later to confirm the facts as repeated by another of the conspirators. Confirmation will be discussed in the next chapter, along with the other tools at the performer's disposal.

While reporting is an esoteric group effort, repeating is an individual task. There is a change in the emphasis of the creativity from manipulation of the material itself to the ways in which it is presented. The period of grace has ended, and the material and its style of presentation must now be brought before a critical audience. Speaking competence is no longer enough, and full linguistic code competence becomes necessary if the story is to communicate its desired meaning. The synchronic period is ended, along with the comparative ease of esoteric communication. The material must now survive in a diachronic mode and in an exoteric context.

Repeating

To exist through time, a story must be in a form which will keep it recognizable as a specific story, and it must continue to meet the needs of audiences as well as functioning

for the teller or tellers. The form must also be one which is in common usage in the speech situations in which the story will travel, and it must reflect the linguistic code of the group so that other tellers will be able to tell the story when it suits their needs.[121]

The first element which differentiates a report of an event from a repeatable story is that the latter does not exist in an esoteric context, and thus it must "create the background, create the mood, create the situation."[122] The first time that a storyteller tells a given story outside the esoteric group of reporters, he will use the reports of the latter to provide the context in which the event occurred, and he will practice a creative selection from among those reports to provide a situational context which will be meaningful to the particular audience. On subsequent occasions, he may select different reports to provide the setting. For one group, it may be enough to say simply that the events took place while the teller was "racing in England". Another group, however, may well demand to know that it was "racing on Bay Bea in the 1977 Admiral's Cup."

---

[121] For definition of "speech situation" and "linguistic code", see Dell Hymes, "Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Setting," Journal of Social Issues, 23, No. 2 (1967), pp. 17-19.

[122] 78/3/1/335

This is not only a matter of choosing those elements which are necessary to give a particular audience an idea of the circumstances, but the repeating stage also requires the narrator to remove such elements from the narrative as would confuse the listeners rather than giving them more complete understanding. If, for example, the audience is not familiar with the characters, certain names would be omitted from the rendition because alone they would mean nothing, and the time necessary to introduce them properly would be too disruptive to the flow of the narrative.

On the other hand, if the audience is familiar with the individuals, the storyteller can affect a meaningful economy of speech by the simple mention of particular names. This is another example of the way in which a narrator can use shared information to produce a desired message with a minimum of words.[123]

One area in which an individual may easily demonstrate his linguistic code competence is the use of obscenity. Most people know the four-letter words and what they mean, but variation comes in the ease and frequency with which they use them and the contexts in which they will admit that they are amused by their use. "The Ballad of Eskimo Nell" is frankly an extreme example of bawdy verse. Because it is in a style

---

[123]See Small, pp. 15-18 and Chapter Four, pp. 78.

often used by Robert Service. I have heard it attributed to him, and I have been told that it appears in print. I have not, however, seen any published version. I learned a version of it from an English sailor, named Dave Parkinson, who had passed the bar examinations but had never practiced law. We sailed together for four months on American Eagle, and the crossing of the Atlantic gave him time to remember all of the verses he knew and to write them down for me.

I have since memorized and on several occasions performed the poem as I learned it, but in one particular instance I had great success reciting it to a relatively proper audience by bowdlerizing it in a very obvious way. One verse should suffice as an example

> Mexico Pete drew forth his gun
> To make good his friend's affront,
> And with one quick twist of his slippery wrist,
> He shoved it up Nell's "whoop".

I simply substituted "whoop" for each obscenity, and because the rhyme scheme of the poem leans heavily on those particular words, there was little question of what word was being substituted.

Another aspect of code competence is to present narratives in such forms that they may easily be absorbed and remembered by others who will also repeat them. The basic plot elements of the story have to be easily recognizable, and the background details must be interpretable, so that they will stay with the story as it is repeated.

Carrying this thought to its logical conclusion, one might expect that personal experience narratives would take on oral formulaic structures and might even move into fixed forms or more complex forms such as local ballads. These forms are systematically possible,[124] but will they fit into given speech events of the group? The answer is that within the personal experience narrative tradition of this group, the tightly-structured forms do not exist. As a first example, the log extract above with its alliterative ". . . heartlessly hurled beyond hope by the hoary hand of heaven, helplessly into a halocaust [sic] of wind and wave. . .", has never been performed orally and has only been read by the two of us who were involved and by our wives.[125]

Two years ago, a fifty-seven foot sloop, named Desperado, tried to break the trans-Atlantic record, and they chose the month of December to try it because of the strong winds. Within days of the report of the sinking of the boat, I was in Jeff Foster's kitchen with Jeff and Chuck Adams. As we exchanged rumored reports of the sinking and some of the other stories about the owner, the boat and the crew, I wrote the following:

---

[124]Hymes, "Breakthrough." The author concentrates on folklorists' ability to show the difference between what is possible linguistically and what is appropriate traditionally.

[125]See Chapter Four, pp. 111.

"The Wreck of the Old 57"

'Twas a cold frosty morning in the month of December,
And the clouds were hanging low,
When the rig fell out of the Old 57,
And water in the cabin did flow.

They left in quest of Atlantic's Atlantic record,
A very long shot at best.
Eight fucking idiots with a skipper to match,
Set off to sail East from West.

They had plenty of food and plenty of water
But were sorely lacking in brains.
Even with Ralph Walker calling the weather,
They'd have been better off taking the train.

'Twas a well-seasoned crew and a well-seasoned skipper
Looking for a place in the sun.
They'd gotten their training on a race to Bermuda
Losing to a Tartan 41.

There's problems faced by all designers
Of ocean racing boats:
The owners sometimes decide to alter the hull shape
Even while the fucker's afloat.

The skipper's name, Tuttle, rhymes with scuttle,
And suspicion in some hearts might lurk.
If you don't think those fuckers were trying to sink her,
You might just ask Twig Burke.

Now that's some of the history of Desperado,
And I think you might see why
When they almost sank at the Southern Circuit,
They all fought to keep the cocaine dry.

Now, if I were to sail across the Atlantic
In December or at any date,
I think I'd rather have a whole crew of persons
Not tarantulas for shipmates.

And now we come to the fateful morning
When the mast was cracked and leaked.
In looking for the source of all that water,
The mast crack was not the answer they seeked.

"It may be the hull," said one of the Bozoes,
"Ya think it might be cracked too?"
But he was quickly reassured by the skipper
Who calmly said, "Fuck you."

"It can't be the hull," he firmly stated,
"Don't worry you won't be killed!
"I'm absolutely sure of the quality construction;
"After all it took two weeks to build!"

In spite of his words, the crew got worried,
And over in their minds began to mull
The fact that the fucking gold-leaf graphics
Took more time and money than the hull.

In spite of the desperate situation
They tried to hide their qualms,
But they're the first Americans in 167 years
To be glad they were impressed by the P.O.M.E.'s

As they stepped off the boat and on to the freighter,
One crewman let his reserve slip.
He turned with a grin to his erstwhile skipper,
"Go down with the fucking ship!"

Now there is one man who could have saved the effort,
Even on that dreadful day.
If the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is really the Mahdi,
He could have walked the rest of the way.

Now listen to me all you wives and sweethearts,
Take warning from now on:
If you want to collect on your husband's insurance,
Send him off on a boat by BonBon.

Now don't be thinking this was vain or futile.
They did one thing for sure:
They hold the record for shipwrecked fuckwits
From Newfoundland to Baltimore.

To gloss very briefly: the schooner Atlantic holds the mono-hull record for sailing across the Atlantic. By losing to the "Tartan 41", the crew had proven themselves inept. Twig Burke was the insurance agent for the owner. It was widely circulated that some of the crew used drugs and that they kept a "pet" tarantula in the galley. The boat was built to very light scantlings in a very short time and at

low cost, but no expense was spared on the gold-leaf designs on the topsides. Finally, she sank off Newfoundland, and the crew was picked up by an English freighter (P.O.M.E. means Prisoner of Mother England) and delivered to Baltimore.

Although Jeff had the ballad typed and hand delivered to many members of the sailing fraternity in Marblehead, it did not enter the tradition for any more than the day or two after its circulation. The stories contained within it remained in circulation, but the song itself fell flat.

What makes this significant is that the group involved has a large communal repertoire of songs and jokes containing formulaic structures. As will be seen in the next chapter, the group is capable of long and involved sessions, featuring complicated renditions of formulaic material, but it appears from these two examples and from the bulk of the group's personal experience material that tight structures are reserved for jokes and bawdy songs, and that personal experiences are presented only in simple narrative form. The creativity at the repeating level is restricted to inclusion and exclusion, and the forms are kept well short of the systematically possible. In other words, this ballad is not what Glassie describes as "safe creation" because there is no model in the tradition which combines complex, poetic

structure and personal experience.[126]

We have seen, then, that there are four stages in the creation of personal experience narratives. At each stage, creativity is at work but within the bounds determined by the behavioral and narrative constraints of the group. One might assume from the precision of this categorization that, at regular intervals following an event, particular narratives reach maturity and burst on the scene of the group's narrative tradition, in the capable hands of one of the actors who has carefully nurtured it through all of the stages of its development. This is not, of course, the case, and now we must deal with subjective problems such as the difference in the abilities of individual performers, changes in the tastes of the bearers of the tradition, qualitative assessment of narratives themselves and the effects of esoteric and exoteric control on the material.

DISSEMINATION AND LONGEVITY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVES

Thus far, we have spoken strictly of <u>personal</u> experience narratives, in that we have assumed that the individual telling the story was at least in attendance at the event if

---

[126]Henry Glassie, "'Take That Night Train to Selma': An Excursion to the Outskirts of Scholarship," in <u>Folksongs and Their Makers</u>, ed. Ray B. Browne (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Univ. Popular Press, n.d.), p. 35.

he was not one of the principal actors. If he does not have outright ownership of a given story, he at least has the right to tell it. This is the point in the narrative tradition at which that tradition and the concept of group membership are most closely interdependent. Along with membership come certain rights and privileges including the right to decide when a story no longer reflects the group self-image, the right to use other people's stories, the right to determine when a given story is mature enough to be performed, the right to pass judgment on the stories performed by others and the privilege of being able to tell stories that are not strictly within the group's tradition. It is the exercise of these rights and privileges which determines the dissemination and the longevity of given stories within the tradition.

Repertoire Control

If one considers repertoire to be a manifestation of membership within a group, then as one grows in membership, his repertoire will also grow. As an initiate, he will find every group-related experience to be novel and thus, in his mind, worthy of reporting and even of repeating. The longer he is a group member, the more he will become aware that the stories which he found interesting and felt were representative of the occupation and the group's self-image were

actually commonplace within the occupation. In his efforts to be able to participate in conversations on every phase of the occupation, he will begin with stories about his "firsts": his first whale, his first overnight race, etc. He will be able to react to general keys with all-purpose stories, loosely connected to the topic.

As his experience grows, he will simply have that many more events to report and will actually begin to have enough stories about given subjects that he may start selecting among those stories and repeating those which are most appropriate to the context. His response to keys will be more precise, and if he is adept at the selection process, he will become known as a better storyteller.

Eventually, he will have a large enough repertoire that he will have more than one story to fit even the smallest variations in context, and at this point he will begin to assert his personal taste regarding his material. Certainly, his psychosocial stance will be a major factor in his taste,[127] but assuming that two stories are functional equivalents, the choice will be purely aesthetic. He will also at this stage begin to be aware of his active and passive repertoires and the ways in which he can manipulate his repertoire to fit differing contexts.

---

[127] See Robinson, p. 84, for his comments on the effect of psychosocial stance on personal interest and repertoire.

As he continues in the occupation, he will have increased experience with storytelling sessions, and he will begin to develop a style based on the ways in which he sees other people using their stories and his perception of the general function of the sessions themselves. He may see it as his duty to amuse his audiences, or he may perceive the narrative tradition as a way to enhance his own reputation within the occupation. Each storyteller betrays his philosophy of narratives each time he is involved in an exchange of stories, and he will, typically, remain consistent with that philosophy. It would be very surprising, for example, to hear Roger Grimes tell a story about a beautiful sunset and the reactions of the witnesses to it, because Grimesy's stories are almost always intended to shock the audience.[128] Furthermore, audiences recognize and appreciate the styles of particular storytellers and begin to call on a specific narrator when "his kind of story" will be particularly appropriate to the context of the session.

This concept of a storytelling philosophy may be seen at work throughout the creative processes of action, reporting, repeating and selection as well as in repertoire control, and one appreciates consistency in an individual whose stories are a true reflection of his philosophy. On

---

[128] See Chapter Four, pp. 98-102.

the other hand, one is sometimes confused when one hears an uncharacteristic story from a particular narrator, and the resulting audience reaction may well discourage the teller from using that story again. This concept may also be the controlling factor in deciding which stories an individual will appropriate from other's repertoires. Seen in the light of this, Dégh and Vázsonyi's concept of a multi-conduit system of story transmission is particularly apt.

It is important to remember, however, that the distinctions among the conduits are very subtle and may be totally esoteric. Persons who appear from the outside to be "congenial" may for many other reasons of membership status and philosophy not be able to form a conduit. Rather than become enmired in speculation about the various stumbling blocks to conduit formation, let us discuss some examples in which the conduit does function properly.[129]

Appropriation of Other Storytellers' Stories

We have cited Robinson's concept of how an individual's psychosocial stance is an element of repertoire control, and

---

[129] For a full discussion of the multi-conduit system, see Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, "The Hypothesis of Multi-Conduit Transmission in Folklore," in Folklore: Performance and Communication, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 207-52.

if an individual may reject a story of an experience because it no longer represents his psychosocial stance, the corollary is also valid: a person may add to his repertoire a story of someone else's experience which portrays his self-image and that of the group particularly well. Given such a story, an individual will have no problem in making it "personal", especially if it is plausible that he was present when the event took place.

I often tell the following story, even though I was not on board at the time:

> The '73 Halifax Race was a typical drifting match, with no wind and plenty of fog. At one watch change, Kellett took the steering wheel right off the pedestal, carried it down below and handed it to Rob Maxon, who was still in his bunk. "Here, Mate," he said, "It's your turn at the wheel."[130]

In terms of the function of this story, it makes no difference whatever whether I was present or not. It is a terse, tight story which makes its point quickly and succinctly, i.e., that there was so little wind that there was no danger at all in taking the wheel right off. The time necessary to explain that I was not there and how I had heard the story from Jeff Foster or Peter Robbins would only detract from the story itself while serving no functional purpose, so I simply tell the story as if it were my own.

---

[130] From memory.

My appropriation of this story is particularly plausible because I did race on that boat with that crew on many occasions. Implied presence or the personalizing of stories is accepted in far less plausible situations for the sake of the functional flow of the conversation. As long as the story is appropriate to the context, plausible in the hands of the given performer and performed with a facility with the facts which indicates that the teller was there, it is simply taken for granted that the teller was there and that the narrative is "personal".

Since it is a major function of the narratives to assert membership, at least in esoteric contexts, it is rare for the stories to attract formulaic openings such as "I heard . . ." or "my uncle told me . . .". I have, however, depersonalized stories when telling them to particular individuals outside the group.

The functions to be served by the challenging of the personal nature implied in the telling of stories are not immediately within the scope of this discussion, but it is worth mentioning that such challenges do occur within the tradition. It is far more likely within this group, however, that individuals will volunteer or be called on to confirm the implied presence of the narrator and that this confirmation will be willingly supplied.

The major difference in telling someone else's stories rather than one's own is that one may not be able to exercise the creativity of inclusion and exclusion that he may with stories of events from his own experience. The telling of these stories becomes more a matter of performing set pieces as learned, rather than a creative process, and for some people recitation is far more difficult than extemporizing. It is, of course, more difficult the more faithful one tries to be to another's material, and it can be easy if the originals are treated in a cavalier fashion.

In the same vein, I think it is a basic error to assume that people have the ability to report and must effect a "shift of emphasis from description to evaluation" to tell stories.[131] One need look no further than the difficulty in convincing students to state the obvious rather than focus on the unusual or the difficulty in keeping witnesses to the facts to realize that the natural tendency is to highlight and to evaluate when giving an account of events. "Reporting" in Robinson's sense is actually the more difficult, acquired skill, while evaluative narration is the more natural function. He is talking about official reports, while I use the word to mean immediate imparting of esoteric material to cohorts in the wake of an occurrence.

---

[131] Robinson, p. 64.

In the light of this, the repeated narratives of other people's experiences need to be concise enough that they do not require a conscious effort on the part of the repeater to recall the story and to repeat it spontaneously. The timing of the responses to keys in conversation is extremely important, as will be discussed in the next chapter, and I have been conscious of telling a particular story instead of a more artistic one because it served the function more succinctly. Thus, in some instances, it is actually easier to use borrowed material because, in its repetitions, it has achieved an appropriate level of conciseness. With one's own stories, one is aware of all the contextual material and is faced with the mental exercise of inclusion and exclusion.

Distance from the Event

I have just described how other people's material may be more functional on given occasions, but there is another side to this. A large portion of one's own material is also borrowed, so it must also reach a state in which it can be easily borrowed. Reports are not borrowed as much as they are immediately adapted. In fact, it is another aspect of the grace period that one may treat others' reports in a cavalier fashion but must expect one's own report to be treated the same way. At some point, as narratives are repeated, selected for telling in new contexts and repeated

again with differing sets of contextual motifs, the form in which a particular event will be depicted begins to tighten, and only audience reaction will tell the narrator to what extent it must be pared and also the elements of context which are expected to remain with it. Audience control and self-correction of narratives are treated in the next chapter, but beyond controlling the specific context of performance, they also influence which stories will stay in a performer's repertoire and which are likely to be subsumed into the repertoires of more than one narrator.

In many ways, it is flattering to a performer to have his material performed by someone else. It shows that the events he has been involved with are interesting and that he has properly carried the narrative through the stages of its development. It is particularly rewarding when a story is good enough to be repeated if it is so representative of the original owner's character and philosophy that it is not repeated by others without attribution to the original performer. This is satisfying because, assuming that the stories we tell are intended to portray our psychosocial stance, attribution means that other narrators agree that a given story is representative and, thus, that the original storyteller's self-image is consistent with the way others see him.

On the other hand, there are some stories in each

performer's repertoire which he prefers to keep for himself. Where early in his association with the group he wanted to have at least something to say on each subject, now he wants to protect that material which will be the final word on each topic. Material can be protected in two ways: either the content can be so esoteric as to prevent others from daring to use it, or the performance style can be such that most other performers will not attempt the delivery. For example, several years ago, Eric Facey told me the following Newfoundland story. It is told with a cleft palate, and like many stories of that kind, the speech impediment has nothing to do with the actual content of the story:

> A Newfie wanted to buy a horse, so he answered an ad in the newspaper and drove to the indicated place, where he asked to see the horse.
>
> "He's right over here in the field," he was told by the man with the speech problem. "His name's Rover. I was going to call him Spot, but he's all one color."
>
> "Well, can I see him?" asked the buyer.
>
> They went to the end of a huge field, in the middle of which was a lone tree, and they could see Rover on the far side. The owner whistled (one of the key performance elements of the story) and called, "Here, Rover. Here, Boy!"
>
> The horse galloped across the field and ran right into the lone tree. "Is that horse blind?" asked the potential buyer.
>
> "No, no, no. Rover just don't give a fuck!"[132]

While I was still in Newfoundland, I considered that to be Eric's story and did not include it in my active repertoire,

---

[132] From memory.

but as soon as I left, I began to use it with great success. When Eric joined me in Bermuda to sail back to Marblehead, it became his story again, and I prompted him to tell it to the group who had heard me tell it, and there were several reasons for this. First, it is a good story when told well, and Eric tells it well. Secondly, I wanted the rest of the crew to associate Eric and the story, because it was a good way to introduce him to them. Thirdly, I could not tell the story in his presence, and, finally, I wanted my regular audience to see that I was an able keeper of the story.

There is a group in Marblehead which meets fairly regularly in a local bar at four in the afternoon. It does not meet as a result of any summons; it simply forms around the same corner of the bar on any day that a quorum is present, and its principal business is the telling of jokes rather than stories of personal experiences. The group is very conscious of versions and variants, often provides critical analysis of an individual's performance of a particular joke and frequently will follow a single theme in joking until it is thoroughly exhausted.

I told the Rover story to this group and was surprised in the ensuing few days to have several people whom I did not see very often stop me to say that they loved my story. The next time I returned to Jake Cassidy's Gin Mill and Steak House, I found that Bob Baker, a regular in the

group, told the Rover story by request nearly every day. He deferred to me, but I asked him to do the rendition because his telling was clearly acceptable with the audience. He told the story very well, and it was again greeted with enthusiasm. He is an accomplished storyteller, and the elements of style and tone with which I had protected that story were not beyond his skills, and it had become an active part of his repertoire. Since he told it well and was obviously careful to attribute it to me at each telling, I could not be too upset at his appropriation.

Because of its genuine interest in the jokes themselves, this group would certainly be worthy of further study, and my first experiment in that research would be to have Eric Facey tell Rover to that group.

In the telling of personal experience narratives, protection of material is somewhat easier. Since jokes rely on stereotypes and commonplaces, it is difficult to personalize a joke to prevent its telling by others. With personal narratives, ownership is virtually implied in the telling. Rather than protecting actual material in an exchange of personal narratives, the task becomes to protect a segment of the narrative field. By establishing that one is the oldest person there, the one with the most sea miles or the only one who has sailed in Australia, one may lay claim to a share of the narrative whole. However, as one hones and polishes one's material and works it into the

most concise form for instant and universally intelligible rendition, one does depersonalize it, and he should not be surprised to hear it told by others.

Distance from the event and the changes that that forces on a narrative may well be the dominant element in repertoire control, and it may determine in what kind of repertoire a particular story will survive. It is useful, in the light of this, to think in terms of group and personal repertoires. One's personal repertoire includes those stories which recount events he actually participated in and, thus, the stories for which he must exercise his option to include and to exclude certain details.

The context of a given narration defines "participation". Among a group which has no knowledge of sailing, the storyteller may be said to have participated in any sailing event, but in a staunchly esoteric gathering, he will have a much narrower range of participation. It is a matter of whether he is speaking for himself within the group or speaking for the group to outsiders.

As a narrator builds his repertoire, there will be certain stories which will stay active because they are representative of his self-image and because he continues to enjoy telling them. At the same time, there will be new stories of recent events, and these will keep his interest as a storyteller because he is still guiding them through

the development stages. The latter are strictly his own material, while, the former will probably be a combination of his personal and the group's stories.

There is also another group of stories which, although he has never granted them an active place in his own repertoire, he knows well through the renditions of others. When these are told, he will take an active role in the reaction of the audience. Though rarely, he might disapprove of a rendition, he might give it his approval, or he might even decide to augment the performance by adding a detail which the performer had either forgotten or had chosen to omit.

In referring to the distance from the event, then, we are speaking about both temporal distance and the emotional distance, controlled by participation. It is not possible to judge the actual age of a story based only on its degree of polish and conciseness, but if one is aware of the performer's emotional distance from the event, the polish is a good indicator of age.

Context Control

The control of individual contexts is discussed in the next chapter, but it is also an important concept as it applies to the longevity and dissemination of individual stories. We have seen how the neophyte performer wants to

have something to say on each subject and how the veteran storyeller will have a good story for each topic. The polished storyteller, however, will have sufficient repertoire on various topics to key from preceding material in specific directions and to keep the conversation flowing. For example, he may sense that the group's repertoire on a given subject is exhausted and may suggest a new topic by telling a story which relates to previous material but leads to a topic change.

The conversation which is presented at length in Chapter Four points out two ways in which this control works. The only true joke comes near the end, when the conversation is beginning to lag, and the subject is changed completely for the final few stories.[133] While the stories on the previous subject were by no means exhausted, the interest seemed to have gone, so attempts were made to turn the session into a joke-telling one and to begin a new subject. The accomplished storyteller will, therefore, not only be able to speak on a given subject, but will also be prepared to move into what he recognizes as related subjects or as complementary forms for dealing with the same subject. The reason why the attempts here do not succeed is simply that one watch had gone on deck, and the other was ready for sleep. Had this been a party situation with

---

[133] See Chapter Four, pp. 101-02.

no time constraints, the narrative exchange might well have followed either course.

The longevity of a narrative may depend to some extent on the number of stories to which it can be logically connected, and some may continue in personal and group repertoires because they offer the flexibility needed for narratives to function effectively as communicative devices. This is certainly a subject for further investigation, because a story's longevity may be tied directly to the variety of functions it will serve.

CONCLUSIONS

What this chapter has discussed is the process by which personal experiences are made to communicate through narrative means and for how long and in what directions those narratives may continue to be a form of communication. Its purpose has been to show the range of the personal attitudes and creative accomplishments communicated by the telling of a single story and the complexity of the elements to be uncovered in the analysis of a storyteller's repertoire.

The aim of the next chapter is to investigate how the performance of the narratives effects that communication. It will discuss the ways in which actual performance contexts and the individual performer's style control and

alter what the narratives communicate, and it will discuss how performance situations can overshadow the communicative goals of narratives and narration..

CHAPTER SIX - PERFORMANCE AND THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, personal experience narratives were presented in a very personal framework as communicative devices. The narratives of one's own personal experiences and those chosen from the repertoires of others because of their appropriateness to one's psychosocial stance are a private matter, and their telling in conversations constitutes a glimpse into the individual's deepest feelings. Accounts of experiences are nurtured through several creative stages, until they are truly representative of the individual teller, and they are selected from his repertoire at the time appropriate to a representation of himself.

Throughout this discussion, we assumed total control on the part of each teller as to which story he would tell at a given time and as to the way in which he would tell it, and we have assumed that he alone is responsible for these choices. We have been dealing then with ". . . stories told in private to cohorts . . ."[134] and this is certainly not the only milieu in which personal narratives thrive. As Robinson states, "When there is a discrepancy in the experience of participants, narrators recognize that a

---

[134] Robinson, p. 63.

performance is required."[135] The discrepancy is what creates the need for teams,[136] and as soon as there is a team character to be portrayed, individual tendencies toward communication are stifled.

The act of telling any personal narrative demonstrates a willingness on the part of the teller to accept responsibility for the content of his own narratives, but any teller who is not willing to accept the responsibility for the group's portrait, as depicted through its several narratives, relinquishes some of his rights to individual definition through narrative means. Even if he does take that responsibility, it is a group character which is described, and he is defined only through his association with the group. Thus, performance situations are not good forums for the definition or communication of individual character. It is a matter, then, of how active a role he plays in the performance of the group and how closely he associates himself with the group character as portrayed and not a matter of what his individual stories have to say that will communicate something about him to the audience in a performance situation.

---

[135] Robinson, p. 62.

[136] Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 77-105.

We have discussed how one of the creative processes involved in the telling of personal stories is being able to adjust a story to a given context. In performance situations, however, the interplay of the controlling element of the group performance and the audience dictates what adjustments need to be made. The personal tendency toward appropriateness is lost in the group tendency toward what may be an entirely different concept of what is appropriate.

With the larger groups in performance situations, there is a need for elements of staging which alter the way in which the material can be presented. This and the control exerted by others combine to alter the style with which a narrative is offered.

Archer Taylor said that ". . . tellers of anecdotes are not pointed out for their creative ability,"[137] and in the performance milieu, I tend to agree with his assessment. Even in conversational communication, one may not be aware of the creative processes which took place with a particular story unless one were present at the event and could compare his recollections with the resulting narrative. In performances, the material is in its form which is most

---

[137] Archer Taylor, "The Anecdote: A Neglected Genre," in Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley, ed. Jerome Mandel and Bruce A. Rosenberg (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1970) pp. 227-28.

completely insulated from any manifestation of the creative processes. Narratives become the functional equivalents of jokes and songs, and the performer makes use of his group repertoire which is more concerned with displaying his versatility as a performer than it is with communicating his feelings.

This chapter begins with a discussion of responsibility in performance situations and the means available to the individuals who accept that responsibility. It continues with discussions of context and style and the ways they are affected by the assumption of responsibility. It then concludes with an analysis of how responsibility controls repertoire in performance situations.

RESPONSIBILITY IN PERFORMANCE

Introduction

Assuming that performances are communications of group identity leads us also to assume that at each performance some individual or group of individuals possess a concept of what that identity is or what he would like it to be. If one individual accepts the responsibility, it is his duty to solicit the appropriate narratives from the other members of the team. He will move in and out of the performance, calling for stories from the repertoires of others which are representative of what he sees as the group image.

In general, the members of the team will accede to the individual's interpretation and produce the stories requested, whether they be specific stories or one of the many stories appropriate to a given topic. Once he has responded to the solicitation, each storyteller has accepted at least a share of the responsibility, and he has at his disposal several means of reinforcing the proffered group image. He might attribute a story to someone who is not present but is known to the audience, thus broadening the authority base on which the team is defining itself. This is done in very much the same way as one might use a proverb to invoke the authority of a source greater than one's own assessment.

By augmenting the rendition of another team member, one may quite simply improve the other's story. The addition may be either from the material itself, such as a detail forgotten by the primary narrator, or it may be an amusing twist which occurs spontaneously to the augmentor.

Confirmation takes several forms, the first of which is that provided by the primary narrator himself. There is a riddle current among the group as a whole which exemplifies this:

> What's the difference between a fairy tale and a sea story? A fairy tale starts "Once upon a

time," and a sea story starts, "Now this is no shit!"[138]

A teller might also request confirmation from another team member, which not only confirms his facts for the sake of the audience but also draws that other member into an active role on the team. On the other hand, one may offer confirmation to support the narrative and to declare his support in an overt way.

As a reinforcement tool, contradiction is slightly more complicated than the others, because as long as it is not forceful, a contradiction of someone else's facts can actually support them by placing the entire factual basis of the story under a fictitious aura of veracity. One can support another's hyperbole by contradicting his with a fact that is not quite as stretched, but is stretched nonetheless. When the original narrator accepts the correction, the audience is left with a good feeling about the team's dedication to the truth.

Non-supportive contradiction is another matter entirely, and it occurs when the image portrayed by the

---

[138] From memory. First heard from Eugene Ambo, winter 1980. "Geno" has become a central point for the news of the occupation, because he lives in Annapolis, Maryland, and provides hospitality for many group members as they head South in the fall or North in the spring.

person or persons responsible is simply too much at odds with the self-image of one of the participants, and he is forced to declare himself to be no longer a member of that team.

The final manifestation of team membership is the actual group narration of a story. Each teller will tell parts of the story which modesty or fear of contradiction would prevent other members from telling because they are the central figures in those sections. The fact that such favors are returned in kind does not seem to detract from the audience's belief level.

Solicitation

Solicitation is in itself an indication that a performance situation exists and that a team has been formed. If the solicitation moves in several directions, one can see a reasonably homogeneous team effort to bring the best example of the team's group repertoire to the fore. There are, however, many situations in which one individual takes the bulk of the responsibility for the performance and does most of the soliciting of stories. The final stage of solicitation involves instances in which the responsibility is thrust on one individual, or at least an identifiably smaller group of individuals.

A good example of the first level may be seen in the previously transcribed conversation at breakfast time on the St. Petersburg to Ft. Lauderdale Race. In the first case of solicitation, Dave Kellett offers me a chance to narrate by asking a direct question about the previous week's activities, "What ever possessed you to invite him for a sail?"[139] In this particular case I was not ready with a narrative, but that does not change the fact that Kellett solicited one. A short time later, Kellett solicited a specific story from Jeff Foster by saying, ". . . try old Maxon. Tell Haarstick the story on that one."[140] Jeff followed with the story as requested, and then immediately did some solicitation on his own: "What's your best food story, Grimesy?"[141]

From an exoteric viewpoint, it would seem that there could not be a much tighter team than a sailing crew of ten, all of whom had sailed together for several years, but to create a performance situation, we had to isolate some discrepancies of experience. Although I was not ready with a story, Kellett's solicitation helped to isolate us as

---

[139]See Chapter Four, p. 95.

[140]See Chapter Four, p. 97.

[141]See Chapter Four, p. 98.

"clique"[142] made up of those who had been with the boat before the majority of the crew arrived. A second clique includes those members of this crew who had also been on the previous Bermuda Race, and a third clique had been in Australia and knew Grimes to have some good stories on any subject.

Solicitation, then, may be seen as a primary, overt way of identifying team members and the members of the cliques within that team. By using solicitation, any individual can ask another person to join him in a clique for which he may establish the character on the spot. While still serving the needs of the team, it might be beneficial to one individual to establish a clique, and he will solicit help in the formation and definition of that clique. When Kellett asked me about activities of the previous week, he was seeking to establish us as the ones who had been with the boat the longest. Although I did not have a narrative reply to his solicitation, I kept the conversation going, thus agreeing to join him in that clique. This analysis of the conversation is consistent with the territorial feelings which Kellett and I had about the boat. In fact, most professionals resent the arrival of the racing amateurs and the clutter which they cause. On this boat the resentment

---

[142] Goffman, p. 84.

was not very strong, as it can be on some boats, but apparently the points needed to be made anyway.

In the second case, Kellett had another point to make. Where he is a sailor who came up through the ranks and has a great deal of offshore experience in all capacities on board a boat, Steve Haarstick, to whom he suggests that Jeff direct the story from the Bermuda Race, is a sailmaker, a Ph.D. in Aerodynamics and very strong in the theories of sailing. It is not unusual for theory and practical experience to be at odds, and Kellett was simply establishing his stance and asking Jeff to join his clique.

The third instance seems to be a simple request for Grimes to join the group below, since he had just come off watch. He was still relatively unknown to those members of the crew who had not sailed in Australia, and this was a good opportunity for him to introduce himself through narratives.

Multi-directional solicitation, like that in this conversation, has the overt function of drawing more storytellers into direct participation. Since no one individual takes complete responsibility for the direction of the session, everyone has a chance to assume temporary control and, thus, has the opportunity to make the conversation function covertly for him if he wishes.

Different groups are often brought together because one individual has membership in both, and in these cases, that one person often takes on the role of director[143] in narrative sessions. A good example of this occurred before the racing began that same winter. The crew assembled in Pensacola, Florida, to practice, and it was an ideal spot because the bay there is well sheltered, and also, Jeff had many friends there from his time in the Navy. Because of this we were able to arrange several things which helped make the practice sessions successful, including use of an apartment in the Yacht Club. The second night that the entire crew was there, Jeff invited his Navy friends to join us for a party. Two of those who came were Dr. Lindsey Riddle, former Commander at the base hospital, and Bill Trundle, a former Navy flier. Bill is a renowned, local storyteller and held the floor for a good part of the evening, but what was interesting was that Jeff completely controlled Bill's repertoire, soliciting each story.

Since he had returned from his tour in Pensacola, Jeff had often told us about these friends he had made and had often repeated their stories to us, and he did such a good job as director that Bill's wife said, "Jeff, you haven't

---

[143] Goffman, p. 97.

forgotten any stories, have you? You'll keep him going all night long."[144]

Jeff had also done a good job in his repeating of the stories, and some of them were known to all of us by name. The only break in the series of Bill Trundle stories, requested by Jeff, was one which we had all heard Jeff tell. Rich Wait knew that the story of the Nine Nigger Bridge had originated in this group, and he solicited it early in the session, but the request was sidelined during the telling of three other stories until he repeated his appeal.

(Rich Wait) I still want to hear about Nine Nigger Bridge.
(Jeff) That's Lindsey's story.
(Rich) Let's hear that one.
(Lindsey) Okay, well, did you meet Tom Watkins downstairs? Well, Tom and his wife and my wife and I were, ah, gonna bring a Cal 40 from Miami up to New Orleans. An', ah, we were going up the east coast, across the lake there to the trans-Florida canal, you know. The only hooker, ya got a 38-foot railroad bridge up there which has more water than that a lot of times, but that's what the chart says. So Tom called, made two or three calls from Miami to the Corps of Engineers up in Okeechobee, an' they said, "Ya, you got, it's gonna be close, but you'll have no problem, you'll get through, the water's low."
An' we went up to Stewart, an' this damn thing is just before you get in lake, a little place called Indian Town, it's a railroad town.
(Rich) Ya, I've been there.

---

[144] 76/1/1/196.

(Lindsey) It isn't a swing bridge, it just goes up as far as it can, then it can't go any further. Well, it turns out the engineers, by the time we got up there - it took us a couple of days, we stopped at West Palm and So forth - well they'd decided to let some water out of the lake, an', ah, we tried to get under and obviously weren't going to make it. So Ginny and Pat and I got out on the boom - that canal's real narrow, you can't sail in the damn thing - so we got out on the end of the boom, and it heeled a little bit, but we weren't coming anything close to making it. So, ah, we tied up to the bridge tender, and Tom climbed up and talked to the guy that ran the bridge, an' he said there's a labor camp down the road here about a mile or so. So Tom walked down to this place, an' came back with a whole bunch of niggers - a couple was Cubans, but mostly niggers - an', ah, we finally got eleven of 'em, they didn't like the idea very much. The reason we took eleven was that's all the life jackets we had. We got every god-damned halyard we could find on the boat and put it out on the end of the boom along with the toppin' lift, an' these niggers were willing, of course he's gonna pay 'em a buck apiece or something like that. Then they got to lookin' at it, an' they decided it wasn't a very good idea, so I had to go out first. So, I'm clear on the end of the god-damned thing, with eleven niggers inboard of me, an' I'll tell you, that gooseneck was makin' some funny noises. Let the boom clear but, with the sheet, an' started the engine, an' we just barely got under this god-damned thing. To this day, every time we go through there, "That's the Eleven Nigger, Bridge!"

(Bill Trundle) Some bridges are a little higher, you only need nine.[145]

---

[145] 76/1/1/260.

Although Rich took some responsibility through the solicitation of this particular story, Jeff still kept his position as the director by setting the perspective and identifying the story as being Lindsey's. It is also useful to examine Rich's involvement more deeply. It was he who solicited the story, and he is also the one to augment the story with his confirmation of the narrator's description of Indian Town. It is not surprising that he would feel some responsibility for the performance, since he and Jeff and I were the first three to arrive in Pensacola and had stayed at Lindsey's house for nearly a week before any of the rest of the crew arrived. There is no question, however, that with some help from Rich and myself Jeff directed the course of this narrative session with the express intention of consolidating two previously separate groups into a single functional unit.

The third level of solicitation involves those situations in which one person or a small group of persons have active, overt control of a performance. The Quiet Little Drink, described in Chapter Two,[146] is a good example of this, because it is the nearest that a group of amateur performers who are basically just amusing themselves can come to a professional performance.

---

[146] See Chapter Two, pp. 19-21.

In instances such as the party in Pensacola, the "back region"[147] activities are passive. That is to say that those things which bind the group together into a team simply came into being through the sharing of common experience. With a performance like the Quiet Little Drink, proceedings in the back region are overt and active. Those who wished to perform had to approach Cable and Dawson prior to the start of the festivities and actually audition their material. When the session actually started, they kept a very tight control on who told which story at what time. They also could be seen to exercise selection as to which act followed which. Since they knew the material beforehand, they could unify the material into a cohesive performance unit. More will be said later on the balance of materials and style, but here it is the tightness of the control and the authority of the directors which are important.

They not only controlled the sequence of the performances, but they also showed direct control over the audience as well. By the time I participated in a Quiet Little Drink, it had become understood that a cry of "Decor", short for "decorum", would restore order and regain immediate control of the event to the hands of the directors.

---

[147] Goffman, p. 112.

In fact, "decor" entered our crew repertoire as a reference and was used any time someone became slightly unruly.

While it is a way for those who are not good storytellers to participate in a storytelling session, solicitation is still bound by the confines of membership. The participation consists of an awareness of the appropriate nature of a given story at a particular time, and this can only exist through membership. Even if he is not able to give a good rendition of a story himself, an individual may know what story is particularly apt and who is a good narrator of that story.

The opposite situation is also possible. An experienced member may dazzle a neophyte with a story which, while appropriate for the experience level of the latter, is not representative of the former's status within the more esoteric group. Should the neophyte solicit such a story during a session, his lack of credentials to solicit might cause him to be answered with, "No, they've already heard that one," or some similar rebuff. It is true of all of these tools of responsibility that they are best manipulated by those with the highest degree of experience and membership, and it is, in fact, a part of the right of passage to membership to be allowed to make use of them.

For example, those whose degree of group understanding is strong actually have a choice in how overt they wish to

be in the manipulation of the tools. Instead of an open solicitation of a story, they may know the material and the performers well enough to solicit covertly. This may be accomplished by telling a particular story which the teller knows will cause another teller to produce a specific story of his own or by suggesting a combiantion of topics which he knows will make the other teller think of a specific story. Solicitations on this level may also meet with rebuff if the latter does not feel like telling the story, but because of the subtlety of the solicitation, the audience would never be aware that a rebuff had taken place, and the team's image of cohesiveness can be preserved even while individual taste is being respected.

Attribution

Just as individuals seeking membership status need to prove their right to perform, teams and cliques often must establish their credentials, and one way of doing this is to attribute stories to known group members who are not present. This accomplishes several things. First it broadens the scope of the stories which may be told by the team. Secondly, it protects the individual teller and the team from contradiction, and finally, it allows for the telling of good stories which might otherwise not be appropriate for the context.

Assuming a certain level of sophistication on the part of the audience, they will be aware of some of the better known storytellers in the occupation, and attributing stories to these tellers will allow the team to tell of circumstances otherwise outside their experience but representative of the team image they wish to foster. This is not the avoidance of responsibility for a story through depersonalization discussed previously, but it is rather the invocation of a higher authority. The audience is not restricted in the topics it may suggest, and it would be an embarrassment to the team should the audience broach a subject on which the team clearly had no credentials to speak.

If, for example, the team is portraying itself as a group of distance racers and the audience is made up of sailors who have not raced offshore, the latter might well bring up the subject of the Whitbread "'Round the World Race, which is seen exoterically as the quintessence of ocean racing. If no team member has participated in the race, the team is in danger of losing its credibility with the audience. One way of maintaining credibility is to attack the exoteric view of the race by saying that it is the province of those making some point about survival and that the concept of the race is foolish to begin with.

This approach implies that the team members had given

due consideration to participating in the race but had opted not to go, thus destroying any impression that they are not capable of participating. This is not a strong defense of the team's position and might cause it to lose control of the session, if the audience chooses to debate the point, even if the stance taken is the team's true assessment of the race.

A second approach to maintaining control in such situations is to attack the exoteric view of the 'Round the World Race with specific, personal experience, and I have used this approach myself. When we were racing in Australia, the 'Round the World boats were in Sydney, resting between legs of the race. Someone arranged a day race between the larger boats, called "Maxi's", from that fleet and those from the Southern Cross fleet. The latter proved to be much faster, and this was seen as a victory for the relatively short distance racers over the 'Round the World group. Since then, the Whitbread boats have become more sophisticated, and this argument might not be successful.

The final approach, then, is to know someone who has raced around the world. One may then either use one's authority as support for one's own comments on the race or use some of one's narratives to back up any comments. Since the audience probably has no special knowledge of the race, the team can, on the authority of someone who has done it,

maintain control through this challenge. Y'all, who participated in the evening in Cowes,[148] raced on King's Legend in the Whitbread Race, and the fact that he left the boat in South America after three of four legs, saying that the whole thing was crazy, is all the authority I would need to retain control when the race is brought up in a narrative situation.

Since hyperbole is sometimes necessary to keep the floor in narrative situations, attribution is a useful tool in another way. If the audience accepts the facts presented by someone not on the team and these facts are stretched to the point that the team feels that it cannot top them without fear of contradiction, it is possible through attribution to go further in amazing the audience without that fear. It would be fruitless to attack the facts in a story belonging to someone who is not present, particularly if that person's credibility is not generally brought into question. I have, in fact, been surprised to hear of the changes in my own stories when they have been used by someone else in this way.

While it is possible to change a given story if it is not exactly appropriate to a particular context,[149] it

---

[148] See Chapter Five, pp. 182-83.

[149] See Chapter Five, p. 193.

is equally possible to tell the version one likes best, even if it is not quite appropriate, and to attribute the version to someone else. I have, for example, told Roger Grimes' stories[150] on occasions in which I wished to shock the audience but did not want to be identified as someone who would behave in the way described. Roger thrives on that identification, so he would probably not object to my using his material in that way.

In the light of this, it is certainly a subject for further investigation to study the feelings associated with the ways other people use one's material and what are the costs of which Goffman describes as "dramaturgical loyalty" and "dramaturgical discipline".[151]

Augmentation

Augmentation may be seen as any addition by someone else to an individual's presentation of material. Each of the tools of responsibility described here may be seen as a kind of augmentation, but there are several cases in which it is an identifiable form of its own. The person augmenting another's material may simply wish to be a part of that performance and will add comments which only support

---

[150] See Chapter Four, pp. 98-102.

[151] Goffman, pp. 212-18.

the basic story. He may, however, see some way in which the story could be made more appropriate to the context and actually change a part of the story to conform to that assessment. Finally, he might add something to the story which changes it in form and possibly even in function.

We have already seen an example of the first kind of augmentation in the story of the Eleven Nigger Bridge.[152] Rich's confirmation of the description of Indian Town does not add anything substantial to the story, but it does show Lindsey and the audience that Rich supports both the content and the style of the narrative.

At the end of the same story, Bill Trundle adds a comment which demonstrates the second form of augmentation: "Some bridges are higher, you only need nine." Not only does this augmentation get Bill into Lindsey's story, but it also makes the story more appropriate to the immediate context. We had always referred to the story as the "Nine Nigger Bridge Story" and when he solicited the rendition, Rich had asked for it by that name. Lindsey, however, tells it as the "Eleven Nigger Bridge", presumably preferring fact to alliteration, and Bill either felt that the two needed to be rationalized or that it was a good touch to equate the height of bridges directly with the number of niggers necessary.

---

[152] See Chapter Six, pp. 234-235.

Another story from the same evening shows again how this form of augmentation functions:

(Jeff) How about recalling the story . . . the time that you and I and Dr. Riddle were coming back from Dolphin Island, towin' a bunch of boats, an' you got angry at the bridge operator?

(Mrs. Trundle) Jeff, you haven't forgotten any stories have you? You'll keep him going all night long.

(Bill) I had this little ketch, an' I'm towin' the world back from Dolphin Island to Pensacola, an' this bridge tender's notorious for not openin' the bridge . . . for sailboats, 'cause he don't like you. So, we're comin' down the channel, I'm towin' four boats, the current's runnin' behind us about two knots. (He makes the sound of three horn blasts.) Nothin' happened. Finally, well, I'll shoot three flares. One's from the Navy, I got from the Navy, the PSY's, ah' look down the barrel of that thing . . . Finally, one landed over on the other side, one landed on the other side, another landed on the bridge. Fire on this side, fire on that side. So finally, we just come up, we just barely miss the bridge, an' this guy's standin' on the rail, ya know. We had a pretty good fire runnin' on one side. The people on one side were puttin' theirs out. So we see lights goin', cop cars, fire engines, they come around and here's the whole shore's on fire over there. So I'm circlin' around, so this cop comes down an' he says, "What's the trouble?" I says, "The guy won't open the bridge," an' he says, "Was that a reason to set the land on fire?" I said, well I says, "I'm sorry the flares landed there, but they won't open the bridge." An', ah, he said, I said, well, ah, "What do you have in mind?" "Well, ah, what do you have in mind?" "What do

want?: I said, "I want the bridge opened," an', ah, he said, "Well, I'll go down an' tell the guy to open the bridge, but you're responsible for the damage the fire does."

(Mrs. Trundle) At that point he could have stomped it out. He was standin' right next to this little, bitty fire that he could have just pushed out. He just left it.

(Bill) So the fire got bigger, so he goes back an' he makes the guy open the bridge. So we go through the bridge. I said, "Okay," I says, "throw the jib over the numbers, put the mizzen sail over the stern." But they got me anyway. The boat was painted yellow, an' that was all they needed. So they sent me a bill from . . .

(Mrs. Trundle) No, they send a request for $25 to the volunteer fire department.

(Bill) A request for $25 to the, donation to the Bull Shores Fire Department for puttin' out a fire. We had this yellow boat, an' we'd go out an' have, we had some parties on that boat, sit around on the brick patio, an' we'd all get drunk. An' the Coast Guard kept harrassing us for not enough life preservers an' all this stuff, an' I'd get all these letters from the Army sayin' I was in a heap of trouble. Well I says there's one way to solve all this problem, 'cause I'm backed up now with about $5000 worth of fines. So I took the yellow boat, and I painted it white. Brush your teeth with Pepsodent, you'll wonder where the yellow went. So there's a whole new deal on Pensacola Bay: Fine the white boat, the yellow boat's gone.[153]

Mrs. Trundle's first contribution to the story, before the actual start, shows the extent to which she is familiar with her husband's repertoire, and since there is no hint

---

[153] 76/1/1/190.

of reproach in her statement to Jeff, she is apparently willing to have Bill narrate. Her second augmentation / contributes a detail which Bill may or may not have omitted, but we will never know because she added it before the time when he would have had to put it in. Either way, it is an effective addition. Finally, she corrects a detail which he was presenting wrongly, and it certainly is more in the character of fire departments to ask for contributions rather than sending bills. It also shows how non-chalantly they took the fact that someone was firing flares indiscriminately, which is the tone of the entire story. The appropriateness of the last addition is evident from how quickly Bill picks up on it, even adding the name of the Fire Department in question himself.

In this case, it is clearly a case of a performer and his assistant working together; but another example shows how two separate performers may each perform on the same material. My brother often tells the story of how he ran a powerboat into the dock at the Edgartown Yacht Club so hard that it knocked the Commodore off the toilet on which he was sitting on the third floor of the club. He tells it well and has met good audience reaction. On one particular occasion, Steve Haesche was among the audience, and when Bob reached the part about knocking the Commodore off the

toilet, Steve said, "What's worse, it was the only shit he took all year."[154] Bob laughed along with the rest of the audience, and he has since made Steve's addition a regular part of his own telling of the story.

Confirmation

Another manifestation of the team presentation of narratives is the confirmation or affirmation of details. In its simplest form, it is actually an individual matter of self-confirmation such as the formulaic introduction mentioned in the introduction to this chapter.[155] I have sailed a great deal lately with one storyteller who, whenever he stretches the truth, follows the statement with "I lie, I die," and raises his right hand as if giving testimony. These statements of the truth of one's own stories are not, in fact, particularly reassuring to the audience. If one feels it necessary to aver that he is telling the truth, it is more likely to start the audience questioning the story, and in actual practice these self-confirmations seem to be an indication that a tall tale or lying situation exists, rather than a real attempt to convince the listeners.

---

[154] From memory, November 1980.

[155] See Chapter Six, p. 228.

As a team mechanism, there are two kinds of confirmation. The first is that offered by another team member, and the second includes confirmation requested by the narrator. While Rich Wait's agreement on the character of Indian Town enlarges Lindsey's story, it does not add anything that was not already in the story. Mrs. Trundle's adding a comment on the size of the fire augments Bill's story because he had not, as yet, commented on the fire's size. All augmentation is confirmation, because it supports actual facts, circumstances or the tone of the story. Bill's addition to Lindsey's story confirms the fact that one may equate the height of a bridge with the number of people necessary to deal with it.

Confirmation, then, is the restating of something already within the story. It is interesting how the confirmation of the least significant facts within a story can serve to lend credence to the dominant features of the story, even though it does not comment on them.

Solicited confirmation has the same effect when solicited from a team member, but there is no reason why a narrator cannot request confirmation from a member of the audience whom he knows to have been at the event. By asking for confirmation of some insignificant detail from a member of the audience, a narrator can create the impression that that person confirms all of what he says.

When confirmation is freely offered, it reinforces the story by taking some of the responsibility for the details away from the storyteller. When it is requested from a team member, the narrator is revealing that he needs the help of his teammates to carry him past a difficult part of his narrative or that the entire narrative could benefit from the aura of veracity created by confirmation. When he requests and receives confirmation from the audience, it removes any questions about the fidelity of his story, and this increases his latitude of style.

Contradiction

The discussion of these elements of narrative control and responsibility gives the impression that the storytellers and the team have something which they wish to hide from the audience. This is true to some extent, but is not sinister, as with the appropriation of other storytellers' narratives.[156] there is no function to be served by the lengthy explanations which would be necessary if one were to clarify all relationships and all facts. The contexts do not usually allow for such clarification, and they would be detrimental to the normal style of narrative

---

[156] See Chapter Five, pp. 209-213.

presentation. The same is true for the contradiction of narrative material, and there must be a good functional reason for someone to contradict a storyteller.

The first function of contradiction is the overt attempt to wrest control of the narrative situation from the team which has it. If the contradiction is well supported, control will be lost, but if the contradiction can be overcome, control will be more complete than it was before. This sort of denial is more common in communication contexts, where it is the individual self-identity which is at stake.

In performance situations, the group's image is elevated more by the presentation of the material than by what the stories themselves actually have to say. Contradictions generally apply to the structure of the material and its presentation rather than to the message contained in the narrative. For example, Mrs. Trundle contradicts Bill concerning whether the result of the fires was a fine or a request for a donation. He accepts her correction, because the detail adds to the atmosphere of absurdity surrounding the entire story. Her contradicting him can only be seen as supportive of his performance and as an attempt to see that he presents the material in the best possible way.

Contradiction is more clearly a device used by teams in performances when it follows a request for confirmation

from a team member. This is another instance in which an open attempt is made to pin down the facts for the sake of improving the team's reputation for speaking the truth. Whether the storyteller is using hyperbole or not, there is still the skepticism on the part of the audience, stemming from the fact that they do not want to be taken in by exaggerations. When I asked him about the stretching of facts in narratives, Steve Haesche replied, "You might as well lie about it, because if you tell 'em it was blowing thirty, they'll think it was blowing twenty. So, you might as well say it was blowing forty; then they'll think it was blowing thirty."[157] If the storyteller says that it was blowing forty and asks for confirmation, and a teammate replies that it could not have been much more than thirty, the audience will feel fairly comfortable with the latter wind speed, since their own skepticism has already been represented for them.

Group Narration

If one takes each of the techniques of team performance to its logical maximum, he will find that the responsibility for a particular story can be split evenly, creating a situation in which it is not possible to identify anyone

---

[157] 78/3/1/190.

as the sole storyteller, and this is a particular advantage of team performance. In communication situations, one is allowed and even encouraged to talk about himself. In performances, one must often sacrifice one's urge for self definition for the sake of the playing one's role in the defining of the group and because of the differences in context and in the stylistic demands of the two forums.

There is, however, no sanction against telling stories about other team members or having them tell other stories about you. I have, quite simply, been aware of presenting someone else in a good light through narratives in return for his doing the same for me. In such a case it is not only acceptable to borrow another's stories when he is present, but it is actually required, if the balance of the exchange is to be maintained.

Conclusions

There can be no leaders unless there are those who consent to be led, and the same applies to the concept of responsibility in the performance of personal experience narratives. Any time one individual takes the responsibility for the portrayal of a group character, there must be other individuals who are willing to relinquish responsibility and to be identified with that group portrait. Instead of dealing creatively with which events he will

report and repeat and at what times he will use which stories, the person who relinquishes responsibility can only opt for what extent he wishes to be identified with the group character as portrayed. If he chooses to be closely associated with the group, the tools described above are the means by which he can implement that choice.

Those taking the responsibility are faced with the problem of how to use the narrative resources they have on the team. Their options are similar to those of the individual in a communication situation, except that they are dealing with their knowledge of other people's repertoires and performance styles. Once they settle on the material they wish to have performed, they may employ any or all of the tools described above to elicit the stories in such a form that they do their part in the group definition process as conceived by the directors.

Professional performers have the opportunity to choose at least the physical contexts in which they will perform, but even they cannot control the audience. For the amateur team of performers, it is adaptation to context which is the determining factor in the success or failure of their performance. The next section describes the different contexts in which personal experience narratives are performed, and the two sections which follow that discuss how context affects style and repertoire.

CONTEXTS

Introduction

Because contexts are staggeringly varied, let us deal with the topic inductively, and describe a particular context over the course of four years. The changes in the make-up of the audience and in the physical surroundings of the event will allow us to comment on the general effect of context on performance situations.

Several years ago a group of sailors on Cape Cod decided to start an annual race, from Hyannis to Nantucket on the Memorial Day weekend. The first few years, the racing was limited to a single race over to the island on Saturday, followed by a party on Saturday night at which prizes were presented. The format was expanded subsequently to include races on Saturday and Monday, with a clambake in between.

The first year Anduril participated, it was still the single race format, and we decided to sail home with the tide on Sunday. For many reasons, we missed the high tide and became stuck in the middle of the yacht basin in Nantucket. We could not move, so we began drinking the champagne saved for the return sail and started exchanging jokes with the crew of a boat which was still tied to the dock. By the time we floated off, there had been many promises made about repeating the exchange of jokes and the

champagne drinking the following year.

The promises were kept, since we invited the crew of that other boat and several other participants to come to our house on the dock for champagne and stories Sunday morning. Three boats from Marblehead had decided to make the trip down to Cape Cod for the race, so it had been natural that a team race be announced between Hyannis and Marblehead, and this element of team competition was carried over to the joke session as well, but on a very loose and friendly basis.

The house we rented had double dutch doors which opened up the front of the building into a sort of stage, and it was used in just that fashion. Everybody there was a direct participant, and the storytelling was for the most part individual, except for a few routines which were usually performed by more than one individual anyway.

By the third year, the group in attendance at the Sunday morning session had grown considerably. The Marblehead team brought six cases of champagne and took some responsibility for the staging of the event. We decided, for example, that the dock level doors were no longer a sufficient stage, simply because of the number of people, and we moved the location for performance to a landing on the exterior steps of the house. That year there were many people there who were not performing and some who had no

connection to the race or even to sailing. The latter simply saw a crowd on the dock and came to find out what was happening.

Another new development that year was that several people had actually prepared jokes for telling at this session and had made the effort to tell either Jeff Foster and myself, from Marblehead, or Disco Dick Anderson or John Osmond, from Hyannis, that they wished to perform. Stories still followed other stories on the same subject, and the stage was not very tightly controlled. Everyone who had a story to tell had the opportunity to do so.

The fourth year, someone had talked to the owner of a restaurant at the end of one of the docks, and he had offered the use of his deck and his sound system for the joke session. There was a huge crowd, and a bottle of good champagne was offered as a prize for the "best" story. Although most of the stories which had been told at each year's session were repeated, there was eventually a line for the microphone, and the traditional spontaneity was lost. Jokes of a similar nature could not follow each other because of access to the microphone, and the traditional control of the session was gone. I won the champagne with "Eskimo Nell", probably because it was the longest and most vulgar presentation.

The session ended lamely, with people still standing in line for the microphone, after enough very old jokes had been badly told. It seemed very appropriate that someone who described himself as a professional comedian from Boston accosted me after the session and told me how each of the jokes should have been told. The general feeling among the original participants was one of dissatisfaction and of being cheated out of what had been a satisfying experience in past years.

What had happened was that the context had outgrown the willingness of any of the participants to take responsibility for it. Where it had been a tight, personal exchange among friends, it had grown to something like amateur night at any big city nightclub, complete with a critique at the end.

Audience

In the course of the four years, the audience composition changed dramatically. At first, it consisted completely of cohorts, each supported more or less actively by his spouse. The all-male aspect of the performance side of these sessions would certainly bear more study, because it was not until the fourth year that one of the directors commented from the stage that he was surprised that no woman had told a joke in the four years. A young woman whom

nobody remembers having seen in previous years walked on the stage and said, "Eatin' pussy is a dark and lonely job, but it has to be done." However, with this one exception, the storytellers have been only males.

The second year, there was a subtle change in the group. The session was still small enough that it consisted only of participating members of the sailing crew, but there was an awareness of a difference existing between those who had been there the year before and those who had not. The directors were not selected or self-appointed, but they were those who simply told more stories.

The third year, the change was again marked by the size of the assembly and by the fact that there were many male group members who did not tell stories. It was no longer a pure, though perhaps unbalanced exchange of stories, but had become a presentation by an identifiable sub-group, a team. Direction became a factor because there was solicitation of stories by team members from people who had not performed in previous years but who had informed the team that they had material, but the direction was relaxed, and stories followed stories on the same topic in a natural way.

The other significant factor in the first three sessions was that the acoustical context and the tone of the performances were still such that they allowed for augmenta-

tion, confirmation and constructive contradiction, and the audience was very much a part of the performance. In the last year, the size of the audience demanded the use of a microphone, a definite separation between performer and audience was created. In such a situation, it takes very strong direction, such as that provided at the Quiet Little Drink, to bring the audience back into the performance, and this was not provided for this session. The two suggestions made after this performance were that it either return to its previous size and location or that someone take strong control and insist on prior approval of performers and material.

Physical Setting

Because of the layout of the docks in Nantucket, the physical setting completely controls the situation. The first year, the audience was restricted to the dock space closest to the boats exchanging jokes, and the two following years the setting was a ten foot wide section of dock, stretching in either direction as far as voices would travel. It took a conscious effort to gain a space in those early audiences, so the audience was limited to those who were interested enough to make that effort. In the final year, there was more than enough space, and the audience was far less homogenous.

Furthermore, the railing on the restaurant deck and the use of a microphone created a physical separation between performer and audience. Physical separation and loss of homogeneity combined to demand an effort on the part of the directors to reintegrate the entire group, and the traditional directors were either unwilling or unable to make this effort. Where it is the job of the professional performer to manipulate his audience and give them the feeling of having participated in the performance for which they paid, the amateur may well feel annoyed by such demands from his audience and simply refuse to make the necessary effort to overcome the problems of physical space which disintegrate an audience.

Function

The function of these storytelling sessions was, from the beginning, to establish a forum for the exchange of stories. Because groups from two towns were involved, there was not only a personal exchange, but also an exchange between the groups. In the periods between the races, we would often meet members of the other group, and there was always talk about "throw-aways" and "keepers", the former being jokes which were not good enough to be saved for the Figawi Race performance and the latter being special enough or new enough to be saved.

At the fourth year's performance, the two original groups were forced to act as one and to perform to a group which was not able or willing to return the favor. The satisfaction of the quid pro quo was gone. As exchange media, certain jokes had been appropriate for the point they made and the way they made it. With a change of context and physical setting, they were asked to perform a different function and became inappropriate, to the dissatisfaction of the performers. The dissatisfaction does not arise from the fact that a small group is asked to provide the entertainment for a larger group, because this situation is often accepted and sometimes consciously created. In this case, the performers could not derive any satisfaction because the event did not fulfill their expectations. It is the same malaise that an interviewer feels after a one-on-one interview in which the subject persists in performing and refuses to communicate on a more direct level.

Conclusions

In analyzing context as a factor in performance, one will find it useful to note that some material is appropriate in one context and inappropriate in others and to describe the changes context forces on material in a quest for appropriateness, but it is also important to realize

that there is a tension in the performers as they attempt to reconcile the demands of actual contextual appropriateness with their expectations as to what would be relevant.

Performers work regularly in contexts made up of cohorts, occupational groups, mixed groups and gatherings where the esoteric is greatly outnumbered by the exoteric. However, the best performances arise from situations in which the mood of the performers, as manifested in style and repertoire, most nearly matches the demands of the context.

STYLE

Style is the appreciation of and attuning to the text of narrative performance. With content, it forms the criteria for appropriateness in a performance situation, and what is critical to the success of the overall performance is whether the individual performers are willing or able to adjust their personal styles to the style of the group presentation.

Each performer develops a personal style over time as he goes through the processes of creation and selection, yet when he relinquishes responsibility in a performance, that personal style may be lost in the image the group is trying to portray. His style, like his repertoire, is based on his personal, aesthetic judgment, and it manifests itself

in descriptions of the contexts of the events recounted, in the timing of the delivery, in the use of voice tones and accents and in the use of gestures. In communicating something about the storyteller, these elements of style are very important, but the director at a performance may require a story from that person to fulfill a function which is entirely different from his own functional use of the story.

In communicating with his peers, a storyteller knows that it is acceptable and even required that he describe the details of the context with care. His audience will be interested in and hungry for information about boats, people and places associated with the occupation. Solicitation will take the form of requests for more news about specific events. Attributing a story to someone else will meet this same need by providing a glimpse into the current thinking of the one to whom the story is attributed. Augmentation and confirmation will also be aimed at satisfying the thirst for details.

In performance situations, where there is a large gap between the esoteric and the exoteric, the people, places and boats will not be of interest to the audience except as vehicles for moving the action to its climax. Descriptive ability is only tolerated to the extent that it acts in this way.

The use of description is a major factor in the timing of the delivery of a story, but timing is critical in other ways. A joke which has been used recently in the story-telling group at Jake Cassidy's[158] is difficult to present in writing without using "A" and "B" as the persons asking and anwering the question:

> A: What is the most important aspect of joke telling?
> B: I don't (A: Timing.) know.

Allowing the audience to react as programmed, whether through statements or laughter, before delivering the next part of the story is an important element of style.

"Timing" is also used to describe one's ability to select the appropriate material to the given context and is almost synonymous with "style" in actual usage.

Context and style are directly related in two other areas: accents and acting. In situations in which the point of the story is conveyed by the use of an accent, it is imperative that the audience be listening carefully enough to realize that the performer is using another accent than his normal one. The following joke is an example.

> An Anglican Irish Minister was given a parish in London, and the Bishop was soon receiving many complaints about the minister's scathing attacks on the English government policies in Ireland. The Bishop planned a surprise visit to see for himself what was happening, but someone got word to the

---

[158] See Chapter Five, pp. 216-17.

> minister that he was to be observed by the Bishop. When he took his place in the pulpit to deliver his sermon, he began to tell of the Last Supper and how Jesus told his disciples that one of them would betray him. "Is it I?" asked Peter. "No," replied Jesus. Then Paul asked, "Is it I, Lord?" and received the same answer. Finally, all eyes turned to Judas, and he said, "Gor blimey, Gov'nor?"[159]

This entire joke hinges on the final three words and the accent used to speak them. To tell this story successfully, one must be sure that the audience is listening carefully enough to recognize the accent and the significance of it.

Actions performed by the storyteller may also be the key to the story, and they can also demand the same kind of attention from the audience. One of the standards at the Figawi Race session is Dick Anderson's story of the "One Armed Piccolo Player". He borrows a hat, puts one arm inside his coat and finds any long, thin thing which looks at all like a piccolo. He then whistles a few tunes, with the instrument to his lips. He then holds the piccola down by the fly of his pants, grabs it with the forefinger of the hidden hand and passes the hat with the visible hand. Again, appreciation of the joke is based on careful attention to the performer.

The final element of style which is directly tied to context and particularly the audience is attention to the

---

[159] From memory. Heard from David Kellett and Dick Anderson at separate times, three years apart.

truth. This was touched on in the section on contradiction,[160] but the point here is that, if the audience will not be able to assimilate the meaning of certain facts without explanations which would bore them in any case, the narrator is free to present the facts in a way which will be most interesting. In fact, he is required by the context to do so. If there are magic numbers for wind speeds and wave heights which will attract the attention of the audience within the context of the stories preceding, the performer simply has to use sixty knot winds and thirty foot waves to make any impression on his listeners.

Often, a particular member of the performing group may be said to rise to a performance occasion particularly well. What has happened in such cases is that the individual's style is particularly well suited to the image which the group is trying to portray. Realizing this, the director will solicit more from that individual than from those other team members who may find a contradiction between their own styles and that presented at that moment by the group.

In presenting the context of a personal experience narrative, it is imperative that one comment on the extent to which the performance style of the group in the given context is compatible with the individual performer's

---

[160] See Chapter Six, pp. 250-52.

personal styles. This is what determines the extent to which a performance communicates something about the individual's style. The extent of personal choice in a performance is critical in an analysis of style, and it is equally important in discussions of repertoire.

REPERTOIRE

Introduction

There are different sub-groups in repertoire, controlled equally by context and function. Although it is necessary to be aware of what is active and passive in an individual's repertoire because of personal preference and changing psychosocial stances, this is not sufficient analysis. The simple, active/passive dichotomy assumes a consistency of context and a freedom of choice which does not exist in actual performances. It also assumes an inflexibility in the material which we have already seen does not exist, because the material is constantly changing in the hands of the original creator and performer of a given story. For the active and passive designations to be meaningful, they must be presented against a framework of both individual choice and contextual demands.

Individual Choice

Regardless of whether the storyteller is responsible

only for himself and his stories in an esoteric context or is responsible for a share of the image presented to an exoteric audience, he will be to a greater or lesser degree under the direction of one or more other participants. The strength of the director needs to be analyzed for one to know to what extent the individual is telling stories which are active in his repertoire and, thus, to what extent they may be seen as representative of his current psychosocial stance.

For example, we can see a substantive difference between the strength of Jeff Foster's direction in the two examples already presented. When he asked Grimesy to tell his best food story, he gave a free rein, and one might assume that the stories Grimsey then told were representative of the image he wishes to portray. In the case of the Yacht Club party in Pensacola, Jeff asked Bill Trundle for specific stories. Since he was offered no choice, we cannot know if these are stories which Bill would choose to tell on his own.

Although we would need to observe Bill in a free choice situation to have a definitive answer to this question, there is other evidence that shows that Bill was comfortable with the portrait these stories painted of him. In the first place, he did not refuse to tell or excuse himself from telling any of the stories requested except

for the "Eleven Nigger Bridge" which is Lindsey's story and which Lindsey told himself. Secondly, there was no lack of enthusiasm in Bill's telling of the stories, again indicating that he was able to accept what those stories told the audience about him.

Certain stories require more attention to style on the part of the teller than others, and it is conceivable that a narrator would excuse himself from telling a particular story when it is solicited because he feels that he would not be able to tell it well. If we assume that Bill had forgotten to add the detail about how small the fire was when the police officer was talking to him and the fact that he was sent a request for a donation rather than a fine, there is some basis for seeking to be excused on that basis. This is more true for more formalized pieces, such as poems or songs, in which the forgetting of even small details could adversely effect the entire performance.

The sensitivity of the director is a major factor in this discussion. If he sees an individual on his performance team regularly in performance situations, he should be aware of which stories are active in their repertoire, presumably good representatives of his self-image and those which he is best practiced in telling. Stylized enthusiastic performance of a story is a good indication that the director has done a good job of solicitation.

I have not recorded any examples of actual refusal to perform, but I know that there have been many instances in which I have refused to perform "Eskimo Nell". In some cases, my refusal has been due to the fact that it is a complicated poem, and unless I had performed it recently, I would not be confident in reciting it. Since there were other cases in which I have not let lack of practice deter my performance, this cannot be the only reason for refusal, and there have been instances when I have refused solicitation because I did not feel that it was appropriate to the context.

Contextual Demands

The strength of the direction notwithstanding, there are rules for the blending of material with context, and some stories, no matter how freely told, will never be appropriate in some contexts. The basic dichotomy between communicative and performance situations is the major controlling factor for appropriateness.

In the entire session during the Ft. Lauderdale Race breakfast,[161] there was only one joke told, and it was directly in keeping with the course of the conversation. At the Figawi Race performance, on the other hand, a

---

[161] See Chapter Four, pp. 96-102.

personal experience narrative would not be accepted unless it were not announced as such and were stylized to the extent that it could not be recognized as such. There was, in fact, an audible groan when one performer announced at a Figawi session that his was a true story. As it turned out, this announcement was a stylized introduction to a joke, in which he used the joke's stereotype to poke fun at one member of the audience.[162]

There are several stylistic cues which inform the audience that someone is performing. The generalization in jokes is one of these, and breaking into song or rhyme is another. This association of rhyme with performance may, in fact, be the reason why the communicative aspect of personal narratives and ballad form are not compatible.[163]

The behavior modification required to perform jokes, songs and other rhymes is not consistent with the sincerity demanded by a communication situation, regardless of the appropriateness of the material, and the most that a true performance context can communicate about an individual is his versatility as a performer.

---

[162]"I have positive proof that Westy Adams (owner of Stampede) is related to the original Adam and that the original Adam was Polish: God gave him an apple and a woman, and he ate the apple."

[163]See Chapter Five, pp. 202-05.

CONCLUSIONS

Having constructed a line of demarcation between performance and communication, it is now necessary to modify that position. Any narration of a personal experience narrative communicates something about the narrator. What the ethnographer must be aware of is that the narrator is subject to varying degrees of control when telling his stories. Identifying the controls and analyzing a performance in the light of them gives a clearer picture of the means available to the individual who wishes to communicate something about himself through personal narratives.

CHAPTER SEVEN - CONLUSIONS

The purpose of this work has been to describe personal experience narratives as they exist among the small group of professional ocean racing sailors, to present examples of their use as communicative devices and as performance media and to analyze the functions, both overt and covert, which they help to fulfill for those who employ them. The genre and the occupation are inextricably entwined, and it is from this relationship that an argument arises for the group membership of the collector of generic material within an occupational group.

Just as there are good storytellers who can tell plausible stories about virtually any subject, there are those individuals in any occupation who do not possess the narrative means to convince any listener of their right to speak for the group. Even if the ability does exist in an individual to tell stories representative of the occupation and of his own role in it, he may not want to tell these stories to a particular interviewer, at a particular time or in a specific context. It has been another aim of this work to establish some criteria by which a collector can equate narrative ability and membership status.

Each of my informants averred that there is a basic truthfulness in his own storytelling and implied that he

expects the same from his peers. When faced with someone else's lying, most said that they would simply withdraw from active participation in the session. They might respond in kind, if it were simply a matter of relatively insignificant details, but the story's foundation in truth would be preserved.

There are definite criteria for determining to what extent one may accept specific storytellers and their narratives as representative of an occupation. The variety of form found in his repertoire, the facility with which he handles his repertoire and his status in performance situations all contribute clues to the extent of the individual storyteller's membership credentials and, thus, to his right to speak for and represent the group.

As an example of how forms may act as a key, one might ask himself if a particular narrator is familiar enough with the group's repertoire to use references to other stories, to flesh out fragmentary stories or to participate in the rendition of cycles. He might observe further whether that individual needs to use jokes to hold up his end of the conversation or whether his repertoire of personal experience narratives serves him in this regard.

The appropriateness of his stories to the narrative context is a good indication of whether he has one stock story to fit that topic or whether he is drawing on a larger

repertoire, based on greater experience. It is also important to note the extent to which the stories are of his own experiences or of the experiences of others, however well told or appropriate they may be.

The best indication of an individual's status within the group is his treatment by the performing team and his participation in team performances. One should be aware of what is expected of the individual in such situations and how he reacts to these expectations. Whether stories are solicited from him, whether his solicitations meet with positive response, to what extent he uses attribution, whether he augments the stories of others or they add to his, and whether his stories receive confirmation, supportive contradiction or real contradiction are all keys to the strength of his position within the group.

Given the fact that context can alter a performer's repertoire, style and total presentation of self, it is imperative that the collector recognize that he is a significant part of each context. His presence with or without tape recorders, notebooks and cameras, has an effect on what his informants say and how they say it. He must, therefore, identify himself, allowing those who read the results of his research an opportunity to assess what effects the individual collector had on the presentation of both the narrative tradition and the self-portrait of the occupation.

The presence of a fieldworker may well alter the forms of the stories told, the storytellers' repertoires and the willingness of each performer to abide by the normal rules of team performance, and these are the factors we have just named as criteria for judging the depth of the relationship between a storyteller and his occupation.

These generic indications of group status are what I have termed "generic keys" for the study of an occupation. They are appropriateness of material, depth of personal repertoire, familiarity with the group repertoire and treatment by the performing team. They illuminate the study of an occupation because they give clear and immediate evidence of an individual's authority to speak for the group. The use of such keys is not limited to the narrative genres, nor does the identification of keys in one genre preclude the use of keys from other genres.

Appropriate use of material is a key to an individual's place within the group, and therefore his authority to speak for the group, in many ways. First, does he hold to the prevailing generic mood of the group? A ditty may be appropriate within the context of a joke session, but it may be entirely out of place in an exchange of personal narratives. One who is not sensitive to his material's appropriatness along generic lines, may be displaying a lack of sensitivity to the group's self-image, and therefore be-

traying a lack of depth of knowledge of the group itself. Deviation along the lines of style, tone, content or form may also betray that lack of sensitivity, and this calls into question the individual's direct statements about the occupation.

The depth of personal repertoire is more important in personal experience narratives than it would be with more strictly performance-oriented genres. It is in fact a good indication of the narrator's depth and duration of participation, and may be taken at face value as long as the depth of repertoire can be identified as the narrator's own.

Familiarity with the group repertoire calls more on evidence from the other genres. When a group session does shift genres, it is significant to note whether the performer's level of appropriateness remains high. It is well to remember, however, that the skills involved in remembering and performing different genres will differ among any group.

The strongest key to understanding an individual's right to speak for the group is his treatment by performance teams within the group. If the leaders of the team ask him to speak for the team, the level of acceptance must be high, regardless of the specific genre.

There will certainly be exceptions to these rules, such as members who are so well established that they feel no need to participate in any group presentations and those who perform so well that their relatively scant experience is overlooked by the leaders, but a general pattern exists. Those who perform appropriate material, exhibit a depth of personal repertoire and a solid acquaintance with the group repertoire and receive approbation from team leaders in group performances are generally those whose evidence or testimony about the occupation is most trustworthy. Furthermore, from the ethnographer's point of view, these keys are observable and do not require direct questions to other members which may cause difficulties. Observing one informant's reaction to another's performance can certainly help the collector to understand the pecking order within the occupation and to fine tune the scales on which he weighs the evidence supplied by those informants about the actual practice of the occupation.

REFERENCES CITED - BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, Joseph C. Tales and Trails of Martha's Vineyard. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1938.

Bangs, Mary Rogers. Old Cape Cod; The Land, The Men, The Sea. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1920.

Beck, Horace P. Folklore and the Sea. The American Maritime Library, Volume 6. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973.

Beck, Horace P. The Folklore of Maine. Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1957.

Bennett, Gillian. "'Rocky the Police Dog' and Other Tales: Traditional Narrative in an Occupation Corpus." Lore and Language, 3, No. 8 (January, 1983), 1-19.

Botkin, B.A. (ed.). A Treasury of New England Folklore. New York: Crown Publishers, 1947.

Brunvand, Jan Harold. The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968.

Caillois, Roger. Man, Play, and Games. Trans. Meyer Barash. London: Thames and Hudson, 1962. [French edition, Les Jeux et les hommes. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1958].

Dégh, Linda. "Folk Narrative." In Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction. Ed. Richard M. Dorson. Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972.

Dégh, Linda and Andrew Vázsonyi. "The Hypothesis of Multi-Conduit Transmission in Folklore." Folklore: Performance and Communication. Approaches to Semiotics, 40. Ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein. The Hague: Mouton, 1975, 207-52.

Digges, Jeremiah, et. al. Cape Cod Pilot. Provincetown and New York: Modern Pilgrim Press and the Viking Press, 1937.

Dorson, Richard M. "The Legend of the Missing Rajamas and Other Sad Sagas:" Journal of the Folklore Institute, 14 (1977), 115-24.

Gennep, Arnold van. The Rites of Passage. Trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Chaffee. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960.

Glassie, Henry. "'Take That Night Train to Selma': An Excursion to the Outskirts of Scholarship." In Folksongs and Their Makers. Ed. Ray B. Browne. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Univ. Popular Press, N.D., 1-68.

Goffman, Erving. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959.

Halpert, Herbert. "Definition and Variation in Folk Legend." In American Folk Legend: A Symposium. Ed. Wayland D. Hand. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: Univ. of California Press, 1971, 47-54.

Halpert, Herbert. "The Past is Prologue." Bulletin of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada, 1, No. 2 (March, 1977), 3-7.

Henderson, Hamish. "Preface." In Kenneth S. Goldstein, A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore. Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, Vol. 52. Hatboro, PA.: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1964, vii-xi.

Honko, Lauri. "Memorates and the Study of Folk Beliefs." Journal of the Folklore Institute, 1 (1964), 5-19.

Hymes, Dell. "The Ethnography of Speaking." In Anthropology and Human Behavior. Ed. T. Gladwin and W.C. Sturtevant. Washington, D.C.: The Anthropological Society of Washington, 1962, 15-53.

Hymes, Dell. "Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Setting." Journal of Social Issues, 23, No. 2, (1967), 8-28.

Hymes, Dell. "Breakthrough into Performance." In Folklore: Performance and Communication. Approaches to Semiotics, 40. Ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein. The Hague: Mouton, 1975, 11-74.

Jones, Herbert G. The Isles of Casco Bay. Portland: Jones Book Shop, 1946.

Labov, William. "The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax." In his Language in the Inner City. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1972, 354-96.

Labov, William, and Josephua Waletzky. "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience." In Essays on the Visual and Verbal Arts. Ed. June Helm. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1967, 12-44.

[Legman, Gershon.] The Limerick, [New York:] Castle Books, n.d.

Macy, William F., and Roland B. Hussey. The Nantucket Scrap Basket. Nantucket: The Inquirer and Mirror Press, 1916.

McCarl, Robert S., Jr., "Smokejumper Initiation: Ritualized Communication in a Modern Occupation." Journal of American Folklore, 89 (1976), 49-66.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971.

Polanyi, Livia. "So What's the Point?" Semiotica, 25 (1979), 207-42.

Robinson, John A. "Personal Experiences Reconsidered." Journal of American Folklore, 94 (1981), 58-85.

Scott, John R. "'I Don't Think There's Anything in the World that the Common Man Will Take a Bigger Chance [for] Than He'll Take for a Seal.': Some Contributions of Oral History Toward an Understanding of the Newfoundland disaster." In Folklore and Oral History. Papers from the Second Annual Meeting of the Canadian Aural/Oral History Association, 3-5 Oct., 1975. Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Publication Series, Bibliographical and Special Series, No. 3. Ed. Neil V. Rosenberg. St. John's, Newfoundland: Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland, 1978, 81-90.

Small, L[awrence] G. "Traditional Expressions in a Newfoundland Community: Genre Change and Functional Variability." Lore and Language, 2, No. 8 (July, 1975) 15-18.

Stahl, Sandra K.D. "The Personal Experience Narrative as Folklore." Journal of the Folklore Institute, 14 (1977) 9-30.

Tallman, Richard S. "A Generic Approach to the Practical Joke." Southern Folklore Quarterly, 38 (1974), 259-74.

Taylor, Archer. "The Anecdote: A Neglected Genre." In Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley. Ed. Jerome Mandel and Bruce

A. Rosenberg. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1970, 227-28.

Thompson, Stith. The Folktale. New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1946.

APPENDIX

The following descriptions of context and lists of narratives are reasonably straightforward. The only editorial quirk is that the name of the source of the story is included in parentheses when that individual is identified by the storyteller or when it is known to me: The narratives are numbered by interview situation and are identified as fragments ("frag.") or references ("ref.") in terms of the definitions given in Chapter Four.

Beyond its use as a simple catalogue of the stories in the collection, the list presented in this fashion reveals several interesting patterns and demonstrates how an interviewer who is a member of the group can keep the interview moving through the use of his own narratives on the subject at hand.

In the contexts including more than two persons, two patterns appear. First, where the context is relaxed and communicative as in 77/1, there is total alternation of tellers except for the final story which was requested by Jeff Foster. Secondly, as in 76/1 where a performance atmosphere existed, certain storytellers may dominate the floor.

In the one-on-one interviews, the nature of the context precludes the alternation, and my own stories are used only as prods for the informant's memory. Of the twenty-seven

stories on tapes 77/7 and 77/8, twenty one are told by David Kellett alone and one is told by both of us. Similarly, of thirty-three stories on tapes 78/1 and 78/2, twenty-six are told by David Buntz.

Horace Beck and my father were interviewed, even though they are not strictly members of the group of professional sailors, for two reasons. Each was in the Navy during World War II and in that respect has gone to sea in a professional manner, and I was curious to what extent the topic of the sea would elicit Navy stories. Of eighty-seven stories told on the five tapes (78/11, 78/12, 78/16, 78/17 and 78/18), two were Navy stories. The second reason for interviewing these two informants is that they are older than the other informants, and I sought but did not find any significant differences resulting from age, other than the obvious temporal breadth of their experiences.

The final pattern involves jokes and set pieces of other kinds. Of three hundred, ninety-five stories recorded, only nine are jokes, three are references to jokes and one is a poem which I always associate with a particular individual. Two of those references are to one of the jokes told, so the total number of jokes and set pieces is eleven, less than three percent.

Tape 75/1 December 26, 1975

Jeff Foster
Roger Grimes
David Kellett
John Mulderig
Peter Robbins
Walter Robbins
John Scott
Rich Wait

The start of the Sydney-Hobart Race takes place on Boxing Day just inside Sydney Heads, the entrance to Sydney Harbor. This was the fourth race of the Southern Cross Series, so we had made three such starts already, but the Sydney-Hobart start is a major event. As well as receiving national television coverage, the race start draws a spectator fleet which is easily five times the two hundred boat racing fleet. None of the start tapes yielded many stories, and this one was no exception, because everybody on board the 39' Anduril had enough to keep him busy.

---

1. DK: Story of another Sydney-Hobart start when they faked the spinnaker set and caused another boat to set early.

Tape 76/1 December 28, 1976

Jeff, Ann and Emily Foster
Steve Haarstick
Lindsey Riddle
John Scott
Bill and Bev Trundle
Rich Wait

Jeff and Ann arranged a party in the apartment they were staying in, just above the bar at the Pensacola (Floridda) Yacht Club. We were in Pensacola rigging Anduril, a new 44' sloop, for practice sailing in preparation for the S.O.R.C. Pensacola was chosen because of the sheltered waters of the Bay, and because of Jeff's many old friends there, including Lindsey and the Trundles. Jeff had been stationed there in the Navy, and had subsequently told us many stories about Bill Trundle and many of the stories Bill tells as well.

The tape was made in the early stages of the party, before several other guests arrived, and as may be seen in Chapter Six, nearly every one of the stories was told in response to direct requests.

1. JF: Julian Waters quitting the Lauderdale Race. "Who do I pay?"
2. BT: The Donald Duck Story.
3. BT: The Landing Light Story.
4. BT: The Bridge Tender Story.

76/1 (cont.d)

5. BT and JF: "I'm the navigator, I have a right to know where I am."

6. LR: The Eleven Nigger Bridge.

7. BT: Dr. Wilson's first boat.

8. BT: Cutting down the flag pole.

9. BT: "Here comes Ding-Ding!"

10. BT: Dropping a Captain from the plane on Matsu, because shelling made it unsafe to land.

It is interesting to note that almost all of these stories have titles. They were requested in this context by title and performed on request in a highly polished fashion.

Tape 77/1 January 6, 1977

Jeff Foster
Mike Merritt
Rich Riddle
John Scott

After sailing three hundred miles from Pensacola to Clearwater, Florida, we arrived at the entrance to Clearwater at about four o'clock in the morning. The boatyard where the boat was to be prepared for the S.O.R.C. was at the end of a long, shallow channel, and Courtney Ross had warned us to wait until he could lead us in. Because of the timing, we did not want to wait five hours, so we tried inching our way in, eventually getting stuck on the sand bar in the middle of the marked channel. We tried several standard ways of extricating ourselves, but it was a falling tide, and we eventually admitted defeat for the few hours until the tide started back in and sat down in the cockpit to have some drinks and watch the sunrise.

The first story on the tape is one that Mike had told two days earlier, and I asked him to tell it on tape to get things started.

1. MM: A crewman is so seasick that he offers anything if they can turn back, including "the bank account my wife doesn't know about."

2. JF: Tough Marine reduced to tears by seasickness.

Tape 77/1 (con't)

3. MM: A friend in the merchant marine who calmly sat down, ordered a drink and threw up on the table.

4. JF: Stories of prodigious vomiting at a bar near his college.

5. MM: Man with a duck throws up in a bar. Both are arrested but the duck got out on bond.

6. JS: Jamaica Pig Story. Two sailors take a pig to the governor's cocktail party.

7. MM: Story of swallowing diesel oil.

8. JS: (Alex Salm's) "Copacetic" story.

9. MM: First boat story.

10. JS: "Hey, look at me, I'm yachting!" (Geo Welch).

11. JS: The Horse Story.

#1 Joke: Freddy and Louie, pack you a lunch.

Tape 77/2 January 29, 1977

Jeff Foster	Bob Maxon
Eric Goetz	John Mulderig
Roger Grimes	Peter Robbins
Steve Haesche	John Scott
David Kellett	Rich Wait

Like the other start tapes, this includes mostly the sounds of sails being hoisted, of winches and of general conversation. The start of the race took place in Tampa Bay on the St. Petersburg side, and was the first start for Anduril in real competition. Although this crew was made up of many of those who had raced on other Anduril's (see Tape 75/1), there was still a tenseness because the boat was new.

There were no Personal narratives.

#2 Joke: (ref.) "but suck one little . . ."

Tape 77/4 February 1, 1977

Jeff Foster	John Mulderig
Roger Grimes	Walter Robbins
Steve Haarstick	John Scott
David Kellett	Rich Wait
Rob Maxon	Charley Welch

The first race had been disappointing, but we had learned some useful things about the boat, and there was still reason to think that we might be fairly successful. Therefore, the mood was cautiously optimistic, and we also knew that we were on our way around the tip of Florida to the warmer East Side, but the start milieu still inhibited the telling of any full narratives.

1. (ref.) "Touriste!".

#2 Joke (ref.): "Do they call me Jacques the Bridge Builder? Non!"

#3 Joke (ref.): "Suh!"

Tape 77/5 February 2, 1977

Jeff Foster	John Mulderig
Roger Grimes	Walter Robbins
Steve Haarstick	John Scott
David Kellett	Rick Wait
Rob Maxon	Charley Welch

The tape was started at about 7:30 as one watch was eating breakfast in preparation for going on watch at 8:00 and ends after the other watch is down below, and is finished with breakfast. The meals are always served at the changes of the watch, so that nobody has to be awakened just to eat.

The previous night had been relatively calm, but the weather was still cold since we had not rounded the tip of Florida into the warmer Gulf Stream waters yet. The other boats in sight gave us no reason to believe that we were not doing well in the race, so the mood was fairly good. In longer races such as this one, one must wait for the turning marks to see exactly where he sits with the rest of the fleet.

The interior of Anduril was representative of modern racing boat interiors of the day. The forward two thirds of the cabin, including the head, were completely open, with the exception of a loose curtain which shielded the head from the main part of the cabin. Aft of the curtain, there were two bunks which served as benches during meals, and there was no table. In fact, the bunks were mostly out of

sight because of the sails piled in the center of the boat. Anduril like most of her competition, carried around fourteen sails, and only three of those would be set at any given time. The racing rules and good seamanship prohibited carrying too many of the others on deck at any time, so there were always eight or nine sails below, and because of their weight they were carried as near as possible to the center of the boat, which was right in the middle of the living space. To make things even better, under the right circumstances these sails below would also be soaking wet. The scene, then, is not the romantic candle-lit dining salon of a luxurious charter boat. It is, rather, a mass of soggy bodies, dressed in soggy clothes, sitting on soggy sails in a dark, dank environment, trying to balance a plate of food on a lap which is trying to get out from under it because of the motion of the boat.

1. DK: The head is never used in Australia.
2. JS: Using the boomkin on Ondine instead of the head.
3. JS: Geo Welch using forward pulpit in the Trade Winds.
4. DK: (ref.) Scott story of "No problemo!"
5. JS: Goetz and Derektor.
6. JS: DuMoulin and the coat hanger.
7. JF: Maxon's shit on the Bermuda Race.
8. RG: Cook throwing up in one pot while cooking in the other.

9. RG: Taking advantage of the cook later, because of her weakened condition.

10. RG: Dennis Miller about to screw the cook when the mast broke.

11. JS: Fosters in the China Bird quarter berth.

12. RG: Crew rebels when the owner tries to bring his girl friend on a 1/2-tonner race.

13. RG: "You couldn't have a leg of lamb, it had to be covered with weeds."

14. RG: Scrambled eggs.

15. JS: Patsy Kenedy, peppers, onions and dolphin.

16. JF: David Cook's girl friend on the way to Cape May.

17. JS: Holding hands while throwing up.

18. JS: I was looking at another part of her anatomy.

19. JS: Warm glass of tuna oil.

20. RG: Bermuda Race cook couldn't cook but would eat.

21. JF: "Mind if I smoke while you eat?".

22. JS: Yankee Girl crew lying about course.

23. JF: Ted Turner taking the Atlanta Braves to the New York Yacht Club.

24. JF: Turner tampering with players' contracts.

25. JS: Turner saying that Kuhn is too old.

26. JS: Turner telling Giants owner that he will outbid him for Gary Matthews.

27. JS: Billboards, "Gary Matthews is coming!"

#4 Joke: RG: Man thorws up on dog, "Shit! I don't remember eating that."

Tape 77/6 February 7, 1977

Jeff Foster	John Mulderig
Roger Grimes	John Scott
Steve Haarstick	Rich Wait
David Kellett	Charley Welch

This start was pretty much like the other starts, except that we had done very badly in the previous race, so there was a slightly dampened spirit on board.

1. SH: (ref.) "Lowell who?"

Tapes 77/7 and 77/8 February 16, 1977

David Kellett, "D. Bradshaw Kellet", "Bunky", "Mate"
John Scott

During a short lull between races, Anduril was docked at the DuPont Plaza Hotel in Miami. The rest of the crew either flew home for a short visit or had decided to go to a party at another marina. Dave Kellett and I felt like a quiet evening, and since we were both staying on the boat, we sat down below and had a quiet chat and many beers.

David is an Australian who has since moved back to Australia but at the time was working for Jeff Foster in a marine consulting business and was a regular member of whatever racing crews Jeff put together. He was the youngest member of the crew, but his opinions carried a good deal of weight because of his vast racing experience both in Australia and in the U.S. He is a big man, well over six feet tall and two hundred pounds. Of the Anduril crew, he and I were the two who spent the most time actually sailing. We also had the large portion of the responsibility for keeping the boat's systems functioning.

The fact that he told twenty-two of the twenty-seven stories recorded that evening shows that he certainly was enjoying the opportunity to recount his experience sailing in Australia.

1. DK: Story of how he got started ocean racing.

2. JS: First overnight trip with Jock Kiley.

3. DK: His first overnight race.

4. DK: Story of several boats deciding to withdraw from a race together.

5. JS: Retiring from first Bermuda Race.

6. DK: Chief Petty Officer Wright, "Whoa, whoa, whoa!"

7. DK: Drunk navigator enjoying lovely evening.

8. DK: Wife and girl friend on opposite sides of the Hobart drawbridge.

9. DK: Fang in a bunk with broken ribs for 36 hours and belling jokes for the entire time.

10. DK: Fang, "Two boiled eggs and a good fuck" for breakfast.

11. DK: Fishing story, one line, six hooks, five fish.

12. DK: Girl hitches ride back from Hobart. When she starts to bitch, they all chip in for a bus ticket.

13. DK: Sisterships Bacardi and Rumrunner in 70 knot gale. Bicardi does better because of carrying more sail. Rumrunner rolled down.

14. DK: "Little Jack" does two singlehanded sailchanges. Later tells Kellett that he cannot swim.

15. DK: (Hall Snyder's) story of running backstays falling off mast on Scaramouche.

16. JS: Delivery crew on Ondine told to keep out of the way while the heroes race the boat. Then sail the race when the heroes get seasick.

17. DK: Good navigation hugging the shore in Sydney-Brisbane Race.

18. DK: Good navigation on Halifax Race.

19. DK and JS: Scott's navigation on Sydney-Hobart Race.

20. DK: One crewman on Rumrunner was on the head when the boat rolled. "It's all right, Jim, I haven't done anything yet."

21. JS: Jennifer Davis on Bejay.

22. DK: Fairing over the head discharge before the Hobart Race.

23. DK: Father greets him on return from his first Hobart Race, only to find him incoherently drunk.

24. DK: Guy nobody liked passed overhead and out window at party.

25. DK: Little Jack dismantles radio and dries it out in the oven.

26. DK: Jim Turner trying to lick dick thinking he's a dog.

27. JS: Fight with Finn in Plymouth, England.

Tapes 77/9 and 77/10 February 17 and February 20, 1977

Anduril crew

These are the least useful of the start tapes from the point of view of narrative content. Neither tape includes even a reference.

Tape 77/11 February 28, 1977

Lenny Burke, "Lenny Berserk", "Havachat', "Hava"
Ali Grimes
Roger Grimes, "Grimesy"
John Scott

The end of the racing at the Southern Ocean Racing Conference is a great time for the professionals. Crew sizes go from the eight or ten on a boat of Anduril's size to three or four; there is more room for each person; the boats stay neater; and, the sailing becomes relaxed and pleasurable. Typically, one or two of the racing crew will stay to help the professional deliver the boat back to Florida from Nassau, where the Circuit ends, and in this case Roger and his wife Ali stayed with me. Before we left, Roger ran into Lenny Burke who asked if he could ride back with us, so we were well manned.

Grimesy is Australian and was a pilot with Quantas Airlines. He quit active flying and became an instructor in the simulator because, he said, he did not like the stopovers in remote places with the Quantas stewards, who are notoriously gay as a group. It is more likely that a regular flying schedule was interrupting his more important pursuits such as ocean racing. He is an ideal crewmember because he can get cheap tickets to anywhere because of his

relationship with Quantas, and he is willing to go anywhere to sail. He is also a fine racing sailor.

Ali is the perfect foil for the gruff, off-color Grimesy. She is the picture of innocence, yet not only tolerates Grimes but subtly eggs him on. We were told in Australia that Roger married Ali because of one night at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia. Roger has a stock saying when asked what he wants to drink: "I'll have a pinit of Tia Maria." That particular night at the CYC, Ali convinced his friends to chip in and bought him a pint, and when Roger came back from the men's room, she handed him the Tia Maria and said, "And you're gonna drink it too, Mate."

Lenny was fairly recently in from Australia, and he requested the ride back to Florida mostly because U.S. Customs and Immigration is a little more lax on people arriving by boat than they are at the airports, and Lenny wanted another extension of his Visa. As his nicknames indicate, he is not only a wild man, but he also loves a good story. He is also a good sailor and had raced on many of the top boats of the era.

1. LB: Fake cook on Kialoa: "This is God, you motherfucker. We want bacon and eggs for breakfast."
2. JS: Mitch shopping for Nassau Race.
3. JS: Huey Long refusing David Wells to use wine when cooking on Ondine.

4. JS: Huey Coming out of sauna on the race to Germany.

5. LB: Navy man on delivery. "Give a hand, you silly fucker."

6. JS: (John Mulderig's) "We're not that fucked up."

7. LB: Sailing through NATO exercises.

8. LB: Bolton escapes Sister-finger in a sail bag.

9. JS: Grossfinger's wedding.

10. JS: Grossfinger's Divorce Party.

11. LB and JS: Grossfinger putting the messenger through the boom.

12. LB: Grossfinger and the skunk.

13. LB: Grossfinger's sheepdog.

14. JS: Arrival in Oyster Bay with Grossfinger.

15. LB: Story of Ian MacDonald.

16. JS: Sailing back from Jamaica with Ian.

17. JS: Kasnet and the fish.

18. JS and LB: Kasnet and the car in Nassau with parts of Charleston car story. (frags.)

19. LB: The nude wedding. (frag.)

20. JS: Billy Adams mooning Prime Minister Heath.

21. JS: Billing throwing Churchill in the harbor.

22. JS: Billy and Danny missing the start of the Channel Race. (frag.)

Tape 77/12 March 14, 1977

Peter Bowker
John Scott
Chuck Wilson
Mike Mitchell (later and briefly)

The morning after Chuck's birthday party at the Rustic Crab in Ft. Lauderdale, I dropped by Scaramouche to see if Chuck had survived. This time of year is the virtual vacation that the boat niggers earn after the Circuit, and it is partly enforced. First, there are very few races going on anywhere, and secondly, the insurance policies on most of the boats demand a huge rider if the boat goes north of Cape Hatteras before the fifteenth of April. Many of the boats go to Ft. Lauderdale because it is a fun town and there are many former professionals living there.

Chuck is identified later (78/19-21), but Peter Bowker needs introduction. As he tells the story, he had worked in the London office of B.O.A.C. for fifteen years when he took a year's leave of absence. That had been eighteen years earlier, and of course he never went back. He is one of the older, practicing professionals at somewhere around fifty-five years of age, but he is much sought-after as a racing navigator and has navigated many very successful boats in international competition.

1. JS and CW: Chuck's birthday party.

   a) Compulsory drinks.

   b) Juliette's birthday flash.

   c) Bartender quitting.

   d) Hall and Chuck have a serious discussion which is unremembered. "It must have been sailing or sex, 'cause that's all I ever talk about."

   e) Bowker demanding rum on Destination.

   f) Chuck returning to restaurant after leavi to pass out.

   g) Convincing JS that he wasn't drunk.

   h) Ambo's car.

   i) The trip to the restaurant.

   j) Mitch sleeping in the van.

   k) Mitch and Lenny Burke's food fight.

2. Bolton-Wheatley party in Cowes.

   a) PB: Page Bailey suggested the cake.

   b) PG: Cutting it jointly.

   c) JS: The aftermath

   d) PB: First encounter with the manager.

   e) JS: BJ and the cake

   f) JS: Police arrive and are bribed by Dennis Miller.

Tape 78/1-2 January 5, 1978

David Buntz
John Scott

(This was the first of a series of more formalized interviews, in which I made the questionnaire more obvious to the informants. I had many, if not all, of the contexts I wanted on tape, so I continued by trying to engineer specific contexts with specific persons to gain more insight into specific areas.)

This interview took place in the house I was renting in Marblehead, Massachsuetts. David and I were working on the same boat, and we were about to leave for the S.O.R.C. He had been with the boat for about a year and was not very experienced, and Westy Adams, the owner, had asked me to take the boat over for the Circuit. David was young, around twenty-two, and his real desire at this time was to become a full-fledged professional.

1. DB: The Horse Story.
2. DB: The un-pick-up.
3. DB: Stampede losing steering on the Round the Island Race.
4. DB: Trip to Kennebunkport.
5. DB: Wilbur on the pole.
6. DB: Gimboled head.

7. DB: McGowan and DuMoulin.
8. DB: Stempede's boom.
9. DB: Seabag full of chocolate chip cookies.
10. JS: Ruthie Burnes' cookies hidden around boat.
11. DB: Ice Cream story.
12. JS: Ernie Gann's ice cream story.
13. JS: Horace's Scottish story.
14. DB: Disco sucks!
15. DB: Ballyhoo's head to the masthead.
16. DB: Westy wakes him for watch by releasing pipe berth.
17. DB: Sabotaged bunk.
18. DB: Crabs in the head.
19. DB: Tampax in the head.
20. JS: Rich Wait's sign in Australia.
21. DB: Stampede missing Grave's buoy in Hovey Race.
22. DB: Robbie Vaughn's landfall from Hawaii.
23. DB: "If you can't use it for fishing, what do you use it for?"
24. JS: "What's the center pole for?"
25. DB: "It's a Polish 12-meter."
26. JS: Con Findlay joining Adele.
27. DB: Collision at 6-meter championsh.
28. JS: Jennifer Davis on Bejay.
29. DB: Puking between sail changes.
30. DB: Carl's mother's lasagna. "Ask the head."
31. DB: Penalty threatened because of girls' bikinis.

32. DB: Girl causes distraction using pulpit for piss.

33 DB: Foster and Gorwood's office fight.

#5 Joke: DB: How do you break up a Polish wedding? Flush the punch bowl.

#6 Joke: DB: How can you tell if a Pole has been in your back yard? Your garbage is gone and your dog is pregnant.

Tapes 78/3-5 January 11, 1978

Jeff Foster
Steve Haesche
John Scott

The interview took place at Jeff's house, and Steve just happened to drop in, but I was delighted to have him join in. Perhaps it was the austere atmosphere of Jeff's house or the fact taht I was working from the questionnaire, but very few of the stories are told in full. There is another probably reason why so many of the stories are told in shorthand style, and that is that Jeff and I have sailed so much together and have also told each other so many stories of other times sailing that we know a large portion of each other's repertoires.

Steve is the art director at a large advertising agency and has a very quick wit. He is also a very good foredeck man, who learned his sailing on many of the best boats from Long Island Sound, including sitzmark and Destination.

1. JF: (frag.) Setting Yankee Girl's 1/2 ounce spinnaker by mistake in forty knot winds.
2. JF: (ref.) The Seven Nigger Bridge. (See Tape 76/1)
3. JF: (ref.) The Bridgetender Story. (See Tape 76/1)
4. JF: (ref.) The Horse Story.
5. JF: (ref.) Fredrique in Australia.

6. JF: (frag.) Breaking spinnaker pole fitting in Australia.

7. JF: (frag.) Scott vs. Turner on Kialoa.

8. JF: Mrs. Trundle's reaction to Walter's story at the dinner table.

9. JF: (ref. to Haarstick's) Ice story.

10. JF: (ref. to Haarstick's) trying to break star boat mast.

11. JF: (ref. to Haarstick's) throwing up in front of his first important customer.

12. JF: The finish of the Nassau Race.

13. JF: The Yankee Girl crew after the Stratford Shoal Race.

4. SH and JS: (ref.) The Horse Story (see above #4).

14. JF: (ref.) Trip to Cape May.

15. JF: Story of Julian Waters telling story as if he had done it.

16. SH: "It was as much my whale as Kellett's.

17. JF: (frag.) Scaramouche clawing away to the west in the Bermuda Race.

18. JF: (ref.) David Keith and the suitcase and pajamas.

19. JF: Scott's navigation on the Hobart Race.

20. JF: Navy yawl in the Annapolis-Newport Race spent the fourth of July at Coney Island.

21. JF: Arrival at Isla Muhares. Surfing under tow.

22. JF: Nobody drank the water, but they all got sick from the ice cubes in their drinks.

23. JF: Paradise Cove in Lake George.

24. JF: Grimesy's "snotter".

25. JF: Rich Wait at the masthead in Hobart Race.

26. JF: (frag.) Turner's renowned infidelity.

27. JF: Turner and the hydraulics man in Sydney.

28. JF: Edgartown Race Committee dressed in blazers but still puking.

29. JF: Impala hitting Angelique at Edgartown.

30. JF: Star Boat collision at start when extension tiller comes off.
"What do you want me to do now?"
"Retire. . . . quickly."

31. JF: (ref.) Ocean Triangle start.

32. JF: Hummers on the Halifax Race.

33. JF and SH: Rob's shit on the Bermuda Race. The entire crew below rolled over in their sleep.

34. SH: Explaining sail change to Rick Husband step by step.

35. JS: Steere's roommate. "Get in your bunk and stay there."

36. JF and SH: Kellett dropped pole repeatedly on SH's head.

37. JF: Haarstick dropping beef stew down JF's leg.

38. JF: Julian Waters trying to catch pan with ravioli.
"Cross court lob."

39. JF: Needed to give crew member glucose for seasickness.

40. JF with JS: Robin seasick on the way to Cape May.
Messer, "Can you make me a sardine sandwich?"

41. SH: Crew member sick on Sitzmark. Dr. Newman, "I'm sure it's because he got married."

42. JF: Bruce Steer on 1974 Bermuda Race. Head burried in his lap all day.

43. SH: Jim Mullen, "I've thrown up on the best hulls in the world."

44. JS: Beef stew all over Equation's cabine sole.

45. SH: Half of Bermuda Race crew sick.

46. JS: One man sick onthe way to England. Threw off entire watch system.

47. SH: Seasick while swordfishing. "If someone had given me the means to kill myself, I would have."

48. SH: B.J. Beach in Lucaya, "All the way to Lucaya, and I can't get a decent lay."

49. SH: At family Christmas, Uncle John refuses to acknowledge that he knew B.J. Beach.

50. JF: Fredrique in Australia.

51. JS: Evening in Miami. "Jacksonville, 120 miles."

52. JF: Ralph Walker at 5:45 A.M. in Halifax. "You never know when you might pick up a listing."

53. JF: Haarstick, "Oh fuck, oh shit, oh dear!"

Tapes 78/6-10 January 23, 1978

Bill Bennett, "Nut", "Henry"
John Scott

I had flown to Clearwater, Florida, where Stampede was being worked on in Ross' Yard. Bay Bea was also in the yard, and Nut was on board as professional. Arriving for a series such as the S.O.R.C. is always fun, because one knows that many old friends will be there, and this year was no different. Nut and I had most recently met at the Admiral's Cup in England that summer and had a great deal of catching up to do, so I suggested a quiet drink and convinced him to submit to an interview at the same time. Nut was about sixty years old at the time of the interview, which makes him one of the older professionals, but as he explains, he had only worked as a nigger for a few years. He had sailed for many years before that as an amateur.

The immediate context was Nut's motel room. We would normally have stayed on our respective boats, but they were out of the water for work, and the temperatures were in the low thirties at night. We had gone to the motel after drinks and dinner and had a good supply of rum in our vans and in our rooms. By four in the morning, we had finished at least three of the bottles of rum, and our condition

the next morning actually became one of the favorite stories among the niggers that winter.

1. BB: Story of movies shown at St. Petersburg Yacht Club.
2. BB: Bay Bea on the race to Travemunde.
3. JS: Ondine in the same place on the same race.
4. JS: Huey wanting to quit the race.
5. JS: Adele on Spain race.
6. BB: Trouble getting main up on Bayondan after weeks of preparation.
7. JS: Andy Burnes, "Well be there in 14 days." Spinnaker under the boat.
8. BB: Haggerty, "It takes twenty days to cross the Atlantic."
9. BB: Star sailor falls in love with fleet whore.
10. JS: Wellsley girls at the start of the sail back from Jamaica.
11. JS: Later date with one of them.
12. BB: Story of "Nut".
13. BB: Story of "Henry".
14. JS: Alternate "Henry" story.
15. BB: "Louse" Campbell.
16. BB: "Soup" Campbell.
17. BB: Getting use of Star Boat by taking girls into choppy water.
18. JS: Trying to break Dave Cook's mast.
19. BB: Crew paying to race on Stormy.
20. JS: Receiving bill on Blythe Spirit in Bermuda.

21. BB: Sailing on Taltona. He made $20.20 a week and the racing cost $20.00 a week, and he had a wife and son.

22. JS: Cooking on Yankee Girl to England.

23. JS: Jocko the swell.

24. JS: November trip to Bermuda on Quest of Paget.

25. BB: Navigating into the Solent.

26. BB: Hears crew mate telling of race and cannot believe they were on the same boat.

27. JS: Clearwater Bar (see Tape 77/1).

28. BB: A.C. and the attempt to get the house flag to stop the wind cups.

29. JS and BB: "Why don't you build the fucking thing out of wood?"

30. BB: Billy Bethke thought Bay Bea crew was good because they wanted to get in so much.

31. BB: Billy Bethke, "Never finish the drink you've got until you're sure there's another one coming.

32. BB: "What's the matter with Nut? He's not saying anything."

33. BB: Sailing by Scaramouche while Herman is trying to sell a similar design to a customer.

34. BB: Star Boat race where they were the only ones to finish in sixty knots of wind. Two people died on another boat.

35. BB: Guy telling Nut about racing Bay Bea, and Nut had never seen him before.

36. BB: Rounding Fastnet Rock in 1971.

37. JS: Crew lined up for knock-down they knew was coming.

38. BB: B.A.-Rio Race on the old Bay Bea.

39. BB: Bolton's birthday party (see Tape 77/12)

40. JS: Bar patron gets mad at Mitch but changes mind when JS and Chuck Wilson arrive.

41. JS: Trip to Europe on Paquet.

42. JS: Trip back from Chubb Cay in Company with Zepher (see 77/11).

43. BB: Nut's delivery to Clearwater.

44. BB: Charlie Kotovik, "Now, you fuckers, don't make mistakes."

45. BB: Crew member drops waitress in water. "I gotta get her out of there. I'm gonna fuck her tonight."

46. BB: Shuff dumped in water from dinghy and too drunk to pull himself out. Hooks coat on cleat and goest to sleep.

47. BB: Graham Shoals story.

48. BB: Twenty-five foot seas in place where there was only twenty feet of water. "That means five foot of sand got that turkey.".

49. BB: (ref.) Star Boat race. (see #34).

50. BB: Navigator pops beer every five minutes.

51. BB: Two beer per day ration on Bayondan. Making deals with those who didn't drink, "Everywhere you go Ian Nichols has already been there."

52. JS: Getting loaded after dinner with Ned Rowland on Adele.

53. BB: Fourth of July on Bayondan. Sticky hides a bottle in the galley, and everybody gets drunk from drinking so fast.

54. BB: Frenchman on Spain Race on Bastile Day, "I don't know where I am, and I'm the navigator."

55. BB: Mrs. Haggerty's showers.

56. BB: Recluta to Halifax. Butch Ulmer saying that there are no sea turtles there just before they almost hit one.

57. JS: Blackfish in the phosporescence on the way to Spain.

58. BB: Navy. In an LSM off Florida. Two porpoises look like torpedoes.

59. BB: German sub chasing them off Cuba.

60. JS: Harry Heneberger and the u-boat.

61. BB: (frag.) 13.55 in Nemis.

62. BB: "If you're in a big hurry, take an airplane."

63. JS: Equation's speedo pegged repeatedly at 18.

64. BB: Story of Siren Song's delivery crew bragging about speed.

65. BB: Races Tuttsworth across Pamlico Sound.

66. JS: 282 miles day out of Palm Beach on Anduril.

67. BB: "Once you get over ten, I can't navigate no more."

68. JS: Entrance to Marblehead at the end of the delivery.

69. BB: (ref.) Ian Nichols story (#51).

70. BB: (ref.) Graham Shoals story (#47).

71. BB: Nubby Sarns falling in love with and marrying his son's wife.

72. BB: Hitting buoy at Ambrose Shoals after five and a half days.

73. BB: Saga ending up at Montauk and coming in the other way.

74. BB: Guy on bicycle saying "You won't make it!" in Morehead City.

75. JS: Buy in Morehead City saying, "You can make it."

76. BB: Put Graham up in bosun's chair to see their way through bridge.

77. JS: China Bird aground in channel in Waterway. Tug going by 100 yards out of the channel.

78. BB: Exiting the Savannah River.

79. JS: Clearwater Bar (see #27 and tape 77/1).

80. BB: Courtney and Billy leading them in after the Christmas party.

81. BB: (ref.) A.C. and the flag (#28).

82. BB: Knock down on Taltona when expert tells them that the light is out and that the darkness is not due to a squal.

83. BB: (Peter Bowker's) story of pulling down the main slide by slide on American Eagle.

84. BB: and JS: Brunzeel rounding the Horn on Stormvogel.

85. BB: Stormy in the 1969 Circuit with two European girls without bras.

86. BB: Roller reefing boom on Bay Bea. "That's the last time you steer your boat, you dumb S.O.B.!"

87. BB: Tom Downs from St. Petersburg Y.C., "We're not here to answer your fucking stupid questions."

88. BB: Frank Zern port-tacking the A fleet. He was protested but won because the other skipper was too hungover to tell the story.

89. BB: Pogo's girlfriend brom Brazil put so much paper in the head that some of it was not even wet.

90. BB: Bolton's Birthday Party.
   a) Aura's engine replaced with 2000 pounds of lead.
   b) Ball at the Royal Navy Yacht Squadron.
   c) Talking to Admiral.
   d) Introduced to Prince Phillip. Louse, "I'm from St. Jo, Missouri, did you ever hear of it? Prince Phillip, "No."
   e) Patty Willman drove them to Medway Queen.
   f) Food fight.

g) Cops keep us there until bribed.

h) Get back and find Shuff locked out.

i) Thirty of us and nobody every called the Medway Queen.

j) Chef got emotional when he received a round of applause.

k) Bolton flips some of the cake with a spatula.

l) "Well, Katie bar the fuckin' door!"

m) Dennis Miller went around the corner with the constable. When they came back, all was smiles.

n) They opened the forepeak bar for us. (see Tape 77/12).

91. JS: Grossfinger and the reef line. (see Tape 77/11).

92. JS: Grossfinger's wedding. (see Tape 77/11).

93. JS: Grossfinger's divorce party.

Tapes 78/11-12 January 25, 1978

Robert Scott
Virginia Scott
John Scott

While Stampede was in Clearwater, my father and his wife were visiting friends on the east coast of Florida. I drove across to visit with them in their motel. Dad had sailed across both the Atlantic and Pacific on Wanderbird, an eighty-five foot ketch. I wanted to use him as a control on the material collected, because he is older than the other informants and because he has never sailed as a professional. The major difference that he was able to identify is that, although he has an active repertoire of sailing stories, he does not have as many opportunities to exercise it. It appears on analysis that the material collected from him was more easily distracted from the direct subject, probably since he is not often constrained to specific subject areas in his narratives. He was by a great deal the largest contributor of jokes.

The immediate context was a non-descript motel room at cocktail time.

1. JS: (frag.) finishing a story of the Hobart start.
2. RS: Deciding to get in out of bad weather in Buzzards Bay when a twelve year old sailed by in a Herreshoff twelve-footer.

3. RS; Irving Johnson as a storyteller.

4. RS: (ref. to Alan Bemis') "Set 'er again."

5. JS: Story of Faux-pas with Doug Byors.

6. RS: Navy towing story.

7. RS: Gulf Stream waves ringing-bell on 143 foot Navy tug.

8. JS: Singlehander caught by pod of whales, scratching their backs.

9. RS: Jessie G. Flynn's notches in his gun for deer shot. "If every one was a legal deer, he was 142 years old."

10. RS: Trip with Flynn on Sanscraper. Porpoises drove him mad: all that meat and no gun.

11. JS: Bill Pickett and the Caroline Rose.

12. RS: Doctor in San Juans. As a pilot, he was able to learn how to steer a boat in a matter of minutes.

13. JS: (frag.) Paul and Bert on China Bird.

14. JS: (frag.) Sven's new rig for Ondine after dismasting.

15. JS: Delivery crew races Ondine after racing crew gets seasick.

16. JS: Herb Wolff hitchhiking on Ondine from South America around the world.

17. JS: Courney and Billy starting Ross Yacht Service.

18. RS: (Bemis') "You know a lot, but you don't realize nothin'."

19. RS: "Where is Roche Harbor?"

20 GS and RS: "Where's Neah Bay?" "For starters, you're on the Canadian side." "Oh."

21. RS: Wanderbird up the Tagus River. The river Pilot wanted to slow down and the bar Pilot wanted to go faster.

22. RS: New London to Marblehead Race. Looking for buoy in Nantucket Sound. Picked it up with the bowsprit.

23. RS: Sandscraper through the marshes up to the Merrimack River.

24. JS: Stormvogel around the Horn. (see 78/6-10 #84).

25. RS: (Donald Strauss') "The Communists weren't radical enough for Warwick."

26. RS: Chartered 26 foot yawl for the summer for $200.

27. RS: In the head going out of the Annisquam Canal and saw a buoy go by the porthole on the wrong side.

28. GS and RS: "Dotie, where are you?" "I'm . . ." (Crash!).

29. RS: Nordien moves Ernie because of difficulty of dockage.

30. RS: Six meals a day, three down, three up.

31. RS: Broker, "I will do it, I am doing it, I did do it." Never did.

32. JS: Kialoa and Passage. Fang found a piece of Passage in the bilge two weeks later.

33. JS: Story of Fang eating Dolan's rubber tree.

#7 Joke: RS: Scottish landlady and the toilet paper. "What's par on this hole?"

#8 Joke: RS: "Rupert bent over to tie his shoe and shot the canary."

#9 Joke: RS: (ref.) The Bull She Die From Enema.

#10 Joke: RS: (ref.) O'im?

#2 Joke: RS: (ref.) Bridgebuilder.

Tape 78/14 February 14, 1978

Chuck Wilson
John Scott

Chuck is identified later (78/19-21), but this tape is a good example of how it is possible to prime the informant's pump a bit too much. He was fast asleep by the time I got to the recorder.

Tapes 78/16-18 April 5, 1978

Horace Beck
John Scott

Horace and I had several things to discuss, including his looking for a new boat, and his family was all away, so I drove to his farm in Ripton, Vermont. I not only wanted his opinions on the questionnaire, but I also wanted to collect some of the stories I had heard while sailing with him. We had several rums, and by the end of the evening, I had my ~~tapes~~ but I also had been sprayed by a skunk which was trying to get at Horace's chickens. By morning, I smelled bad and was hungover, but the skunk was dead.

1. HB: Gale in the North Sea on the race to Denmark.
2. HB: Gale off Lisbon.
3. JS: November trip to Bermuda. (see 78/6-10 #24).
4. HB: Hove to on Tilly Twin. "Boys, I was at Salerno, at Anzio and in the first wave at Omaha Beach, but if I see the light of day tomorrow, I'll turn Catholic."
5. HB: (frag.) Complaining about the amount of liquor on China Bird.
6. HB: In hotel in Copenhagen, jumped up to get the mainsail down.
7. HB: Twenty-one days out of Mahone Bay, crewman hears breakers. Turns out to be leatherback turtle, eating seaweed.
8. HB: Basking shark up behind dinghy. His mouth overlapped two feet on either side.

9. HB: Three sperm whales sleeping in the remnants of a giant squid. Tentacles 9 inches to a foot in diameter.

10. HB; Hear someone yelling "Help!" but never saw a thing.

11. JS: "Yahoo!" story.

12. HB: In a hell of a racket off Cape Elizabeth but never knew what it was.

13. HB: Seals singing in Moray Firth.

14. HB: In Mahone Bay saw pink glow. Fisherman said, "That's the Teazer, you won't go out tonight." Gale by morning.

15. JS: Story of the end of the Nassau Race on Stampede.

16. HB: Story of the Blue Peter.

17. JS: (ref.) Yankee Girl on Fastnet Race.

18. HB: Skinned Eider ducks as burn cure.

19. JS: Story of telling stories to calm crew.

20. HB: (frag.) Story of feeding razorblades to seagulls changed to tying fish together.

21. JS: (frag.) Horace pissing in the cockpit.

22. HB: 198, 196 and 197 mile days back to back.

23. HB: Blowing so hard that the heavy headboard of the spinnaker was flying.

24. HB; Gale off Lisbon. (More of #2).

25. JS: Island Sailing Club story.

26. HB: Another boat anchoring too close at Mull.

27. JS: Wind and sea conditions on the way to England on Yankee Girl.

28. JS: Ethelbert Nevin Trophy on the race to England on Adele.

29. HB: Ethelbert and the coffee pot. -"Oh, sorry."

30. HB: Ethelbert and the screws for the window shutters. "Oh, sorry."

31. HB: Tapping the barometer every fifteen minutes.

32. JS: O'Brien and the half-way dinner.

33. JS: O'Brien giving up smoking.

34. HB: The pipe in the bilge.

35. JS: Airmail paper cigarettes.

36. HB: David Kayle and JS tasting wine in Madeira.

37. JS: Visit to David's house.

38. JS: Sven's eight times around the world, fourteen west to east and six east to west.

39. HB: Owner of Westerly lost everything in the crash. The skipper bought the boat and took the owner sailing for two weeks each year.

40. HB: "Captain Barr, heave the vessel to." "Too Late."

41. HB: "I'm out here, Bill. If you want to see me, roll out. I'm busy."

42. HB: "Damn Yankees". Nearly pulls dock down in Morehead City.

43. HB: "Here's your ice."

44. HB: Ten meter. Quadrilateral upside down.

45. JS: Truesdale's three sail changes.

46. HB: Ike Manchester, "Mr. Ireland, either you take the spinnaker off or God will."

47. JS: Ike Manchester, "Well then, make some coffee, you God-damned East-o'-Boston Basta'd."

48. HB: Ike checks out new mainsail for China Bird, and Horace doesn't remember leaving the dock after dinner.

#11 Joke (set piece): JS: "I sing of a singular fellow . . ." (Doug Byors).

Tapes 78/19-21 April 12, 1978

Chuck Wilson, "Chico", "Charlie Boy"
John Scott

Chuck arrived in Marblehead with Scaramouche's sails which were to be worked on at Hood's Sail Loft and called to beg a room for the night. He and his mate had stayed with us for several weeks the previous fall and had saved my wife's sanity when I was gone on a trip for ten days that should have lasted five. As one can see from Tape 78/14, we had already tried to do an interview, so he was certainly willing. Since he had been around the world on Kialoa and was the professional on one of the most successful boats in international competition, Scaramouche, his input was critical for a control on the rest of the material. We have been friends for a long enough time that his confirmation of my existing material did not surprise me, but I felt the reinforcement was necessary.

The interview took place in my house, over several rums and an on-going game of darts.

1. CW: Hurrican Amy during the race to England.
2. CW: Crossing the Indian Ocean on Kialoa.
3. CW: How "Filthy" got his nickname.
4. CW: Creating the drink Kialoa, at the Tradewinds bar in Fiji.

5. CW: Porpoises swimming upside down.

6. JS: The porpoise derby on the Bermuda Race.

7. CW: Bosun Bird kept flying into the lee of the main and diving.

8. JS: Mickey Spillane letting the mainsail go and dropping seagulls into the water.

9. CW: Seagull on deck for the whole night in the Indian Ocean.

10. JS: Seagull on Ondine.

11. CW: Comparison of speed on the Hobart Race and in the Indian Ocean.

12. CW: Mike Adams missing Ambrose Lightship on a clear, moonlit night.

13. CW: Bowker's navigation on the Channel Race.

14. CW: Stop in Diego Garcia.

15. CW: Head breaks on Scaramouche with CW on it.

16. JS: Steere's roommate.

17. CW: Athletic Director from Hillsdale College, "If this is fun, I'm leavin'."

18. CW: Coming back from Bermuda on Bumblebee: Seasick crew member with bucket is cheered on by the rest of the crew.

19. CW: Bowker can cook in any weather but always makes a mess.

20. JS: La Rochelle to Lisbon with Bowker on American Eagle.

21. CW: Story of "One Giant cookie".

22. CW: "You take care of him, Suzanne, it's his birthday." (see 77/12).

23. CW: The Island Sailing Club.

24. CW and JS: Party on Scaramouche. "Boat Nigger Solidarity Day".

25. CW: Jump-starting Ondine's engine during the Sydney-Hobart Race.

26. CW: Fingerman and the boom. "As Fang says, 'I don't know if it's true, but I've gotten a lot of mileage out of it.'"

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrahams, Roger D. "Folklore and Literature as Performance." Journal of the Folklore Institute, 9 (1972), 75-94.

Barnes, J.A. "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish." Human Relations, 7:1 (1954), 39-58.

Bascom, William R. "Four Functions of Folklore." Journal of American Folklore, 67 (1954), 333-49.

Bauman, Richard. "The La Have General Store: Sociability and Verbal Art in a Nova Scotia Community." Journal of American Folklore, 85 (1972), 330-43.

----------. "Verbal Art as Performance." American Anthropologist, 77 (1975), 290-311.

Ben-Amos, Dan. "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context." Journal of American Folklore, 84 (1971), 3-15.

----------, and Kenneth S. Goldstein, eds. Folklore: Performance and Communication. (Approaches to Semiotics, 40) The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Georges, Robert A. "Toward an Understanding of Storytelling Events." Journal of American Folklore, 82 (1969), 313-28.

Jansen, Wm. Hugh. "The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore." Fabula: Journal of Folktale Studies, 2 (1959), 205-11.

Jacobs, Melville. The Content and Style of an Oral Literature. Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1959.

Special Journal Issues

Journal of American Folklore, 84, No. 331 (Jan./March 1971).

Journal of the Folklore Institute, 14 (1977).