# A STRUCTURALIST'S VIEW OF AN INDIAN CREATION MYTH

Ron Messer
*Victoria, B.C.*

*Abstract:* Within the mythology of the North American Indians a certain supernatural being is frequently presented as the synthesis of two apparently divergent traits of character. Here, the trickster-transformer-culture hero, or trickster-hero, as he is sometimes called (Ricketts 1966:327), is at one and the same time a hero and a deceiver. The trickster-hero is both courageous and cunning, ingenious and impudent. This apparent contradiction in his personality, which appears so blatantly obvious to the student of native folklore and mythology, is taken as a matter of course by the native American Indian. It will also provide the focal point for the investigation to be undertaken.

*Résumé:* Dans la mythologie des Indiens d'Amérique du Nord, un certain être surnaturel est fréquemment présenté comme la synthèse de deux traits de caractère divergents sinon contradictoires. Selon ce thème, le héros culturel-imposteur-magicien, ou héros-imposteur comme on l'appelle parfois (Ricketts 1966:327), est tout à la fois un héros et un imposteur. Ce héros-imposteur est en même temps courageux et rusé, sincère et plein d'effronterie. Cette apparente contradiction dans sa personnalité, qui semble si évidente à celui engagé dans l'étude du folklore et de la mythologie autochtones, est considérée comme un fait allant de soi par les Amérindiens. Et elle constituera le sujet central de la recherche entreprise ici.

Structuralism has been with us for over three decades, and though it may no longer be in vogue, its usefulness as a methodological tool for interpreting a variety of cultural expressions (including myth) still exists. Structuralism has been criticized for being overly reductionistic — a critique levelled at its underlying theory. This critique, however, stands apart from the powerful hermeneutic which structuralism offers as a methodology. In ways which recall the early reception accorded to psychoanalytic theory, structuralism has moved from being a revolutionary paradigm for understanding social/psychological phenomena to being an anachronism in social thinking. Reminiscent too of the history of psychoanalysis is the fact that, although the underlying theory is open to question, the practicability of the method is not. This paper will not defend structuralist theory but rather apply its methodology in

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providing insights into the ubiquitous mythic conundrum of the trickster-hero.

Claude Lévi-Strauss has offered a novel approach to the understanding of the combination of these apparently ambiguous traits of character.[1] By viewing myth as composed of a diachronic dimension which is undergirded by an ahistorical synchronic plane, structuralism does away with arguments which focus on temporality, examining the ambiguous nature of mythical figures who combine heroic and deceptive traits as a manifestation of an invariant structuring principle independent of time (Lévi-Strauss 1963:211-212). By analyzing myth as a manifestation of the operation of a single universal common denominator (i.e., the human mind) Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology examines the trickster-hero relationship as a logical manifestation of an unconscious structuring activity whose purpose it is to come to terms with a real life conflict (Lévi-Strauss 1963:229). Structuralism as a methodological device has demonstrated that seemingly inexplicable elements in myth, when viewed in terms of an underlying structure, have meaning. The North American Indian trickster is a case in point. In his writings Lévi-Strauss has shown that figures such as tricksters function as mediators by bringing opposites into relation (Lévi-Strauss 1963:224). What is interesting about this proposition is that in many instances these supernatural beings act not only as tricksters, but as heroes as well. To arrive at a better understanding of this paradoxical relationship this essay will examine a particular instance of the combination of these qualities.

The mythology of the Ojibwa Indians of the Great Lakes deals at length with the adventures of a certain supernatural being frequently referred to as Nanabozho. Through analysis of the mythological data relating to this figure, Lévi-Strauss' method of myth interpretation will be employed to elucidate a particular part of the native tradition. It will thereby address the twofold question: What does a structural analysis tell us about the role of the trickster-hero in Ojibwa folklore, and further, why does he combine these two apparently disparate traits of character?

## The Theory

According to Lévi-Strauss, through the senses man apprehends the world around him and transforms his perceptions into coded messages processed via the agency of the mind. These messages function in terms of binary oppositions, which, through mediation and correlation with other relations of opposition, present a logical structure manifest — although not always apparent — in social life. Lévi-Strauss refers to the procedure by which these relations of opposition are deduced and elucidated as structural anthropology, or simply structuralism.

Crucial to any understanding of Lévi-Strauss is his conceptualization of

the mind, which is the unconscious generator of all symbolic activity. Because the mind operates in a logical fashion, symbolic formations will be structured according to its dictates, leading Lévi-Strauss to posit "an internal logic which directs the unconscious workings of the human mind even in those of its creations which have long been considered the most arbitrary" (Lévi-Strauss 1969a:220). Entailed in this conceptualization is both a conscious and an unconscious sphere. Consciously the mind apprehends phenomenal reality via the senses, while unconsciously it acts as the structuring principle for these perceptions.

The structures produced by the mind are manifest in various forms, such as kinship systems, myths and totemic classifications. It is this structuring mental activity which "unifies form and content, and therefore contributes to the emerging of an ordered social interaction" (Rossi 1974:98). Because this order is structured, posits Lévi-Strauss, it can be examined and understood by social science. Thus, between mind and reality there is a reciprocal exchange where reality provides mind with the raw material upon which it operates (ibid.:99).

Lévi-Strauss' quest, simply stated, is for human universals, where verbal "categories provide the mechanism through which [formal] universal structural characteristics of the human brain are transformed into universal structural characteristics of human culture" (Leach 1970:38). It is through these categories that man communicates not only overtly, but covertly as well, revealing a "deep" level at which messages are transmitted, socially manifested and structurally articulated. This formulation provides the basis for Lévi-Strauss' understanding of totemism, kinship and, perhaps most importantly, myth.

Myth, like totemic systems of classification and kinship is a form of communication which is encompassed by the structuralist's paradigm, although it is quite different and structurally much more complex than either of the latter, for in myth the mind is left

> to commune with itself and no longer has to come to terms with objects, it is in a sense reduced to imitating itself as an object; and since the laws governing its operations are not fundamentally different from those it exhibits in other functions, it shows itself to be of the nature of a thing among things. (Lévi-Strauss 1966:10)

The purpose of myth, Lévi-Strauss notes, is to address itself to the logical inconsistencies within nature and society, making statements about *mores* and values, and further enter into a discussion — at a meta-linguistic level — of the unresolvable dilemmas of human existence, such as life and death and man's place in nature (Campbell 1974:22).

**The Method**

Two trends are evident in Lévi-Strauss' writings on the structural study of myth. The first of these delineates a methodology for the derivation of the myth's basic units, along with their permutations, transformations and mediation within a corpus selected for study. The second, more haphazard procedure selects material, seemingly at random, from culturally diverse and geographically remote areas.[2] These two procedures, it should be noted, are not antithetical, and certainly the latter is justified within the structuralist's frame of reference. However, for the purposes of articulating how a myth should be analyzed, Lévi-Strauss' initial statement (and in my opinion his most lucid) provides the clearest methodological guidelines for the purposes of exposition. This is contained in his 1955 essay "The Structural Study of Myth" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:206-231). This is not to say that Lévi-Strauss' later formulations (as in *The Raw and the Cooked*) will not be utilized in the application of his theoretical principles to the mythology, but rather that his initial statement provides a convenient starting point for a description of his rules of procedure. As will be noted further on, concepts such as codes and messages (for example) are important in the exposition of the myth's structure, and will be utilized in the analysis.

Given the fact that studies of myth have, for the most part, been inconclusive, Lévi-Strauss ventures that further research should be directed towards unearthing some universal common denominator (Lévi-Strauss 1963:207). This leads him to postulate that myth, insofar as it resembles totemic systems of classification and kin designations, is a form of communication which is comprehensible not at the surface level, but at the level of an underlying structure. The question becomes, then, how is this structure to be apprehended? Conveniently, as Lévi-Strauss notes, myth *is* language and therefore, to a certain extent, governed by its rules — but not entirely (ibid.:210).

Though Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology borrows extensively from structural linguistics, he is careful to point out that language in myth exhibits "*specific* properties" [emphasis mine] (Lévi-Strauss 1963:210). Following de Saussure, Lévi-Strauss notes that language is made up of two components: *langue* — the structural properties of a language — and *parole* — the statistical frequency with which these properties occur. Myth, in this schema, is a composite of the two, and yet distinct; it is "an absolute entity on a third level" (ibid.:209-210).

Because of this, the properties of myth exhibit "more complex features than those which are to be found in any other kind of linguistic expression" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:210). Allowing for this, two hypotheses are generated, namely: (1) myth is made up of constituent units; (2) even though they are like the constituent units of language (phonemes, morphemes, sememes), the

units which make up the language of myth are of a higher and more complex order. Lévi-Strauss refers to these as "gross constituent units" or "mythemes." Based on the linguistic analogy with the phoneme, the mytheme represents the smallest significant unit of contrast within the myth.

The derivation of mythemes takes place at the sentence level. Here, each myth is analyzed individually with a view towards breaking its story line into a series of short, concise statements which are methodically transcribed onto index cards, numbered in sequence, corresponding to the unfolding of the story. This, in Lévi-Strauss' terms, is the diachronic level, and should show that a certain function is "at a given time linked to a given subject. Or, to put it otherwise, each gross constituent unit will consist of a relation" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:211).

Yet, because of the non-reversible nature of time in the diachronic dimension, a synchronic plane, or atemporal dimension, is necessary. On the synchronic level time stands still, as it were, becoming altogether ahistorical. Yet, what gives myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described is timeless; "it explains the present and the past as well as the future" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:209). Thus both the diachronic and synchronic dimensions must be considered when analyzing a particular myth or set of myths (ibid.:211). Accordingly, the "true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but bundles of such relations, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning" (ibid.). Thus, the relationships among the mythemes, or "bundles of relations" lead us to the underlying structure, and hence the meaning of the myth.

Lévi-Strauss notes that myths are only imperfectly transmitted in individual accounts, often leaving their reliability in doubt. Yet the structuralist's model does away with this problem of searching for the "true" or original version by subsuming it within its theoretical framework, where a myth consists of "all its variants." Or, as Leach puts it:

> Lévi-Strauss' postulate is that a corpus of mythology constitutes an orchestra score. The collectivity of the senior members of the society, through its religious institutions, is unconsciously transmitting to the junior members a basic message which is manifest in the score as a whole rather than any particular myth. (Leach 1970:60)

Following this line of argument, to discover the structure of the myth Lévi-Strauss' method requires us to lay out our index cards in a two-dimensional gridwork, with the horizontal plane corresponding to the diachronic level of the myth, and the vertical, to the synchronic. Now the myth can be viewed in two dimensions, and if the other versions are added to the corpus, allowing us a more comprehensive view, a third dimension is

added whereby the accumulated mythemes can be read diachronically, synchronically, and from front to back (Lévi-Strauss 1963:225). Then, by examining the relations between binary pairs of opposites among the mythemes, the grammar, or structure of the myth is made apparent. This structure will be coded, i.e., it will refer to various spheres of social life, such as the economy, political order, kinship, etc., and articulate, through relations of oppositions, the myth's central contradictions (Prattis 1978:10).

The oppositions within myths and their relations, function dialectically in this schema, and are mediated within each code by a third term which possesses characteristics of both contradictories and acts so as to reconcile their differences. Failing to do so, it, too, becomes one of a pair of opposites which in turn must be mediated. Thus, a series of opposites, each seeking mediation, is generated – Lévi-Strauss refers to these formations as "triads." In this way the myth structures itself, growing "spiral-wise until the intellectual impulse which has produced it is exhausted. Its growth is a continuous process, whereas its structure remains discontinuous" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:229). The purpose of myth, for Lévi-Strauss, is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming contradictions.

It is important to note that the codes within myth are interchangeable and provide the vehicle for transmitting the underlying structure. It is in fact the interchangeability of the codes which allows a synchronic dimension to emerge during the analysis.

Briefly, then, a structural analysis illustrates an underlying structure within myth through which the various codes and their transformations and permutations transmit messages addressing contradictions. The presence of mediators signals that the contradiction being addressed has been defined – in the form of opposing relations – and a resolution sought. Failure to solve the paradox causes the message being transmitted to switch over onto another code and level, and again seek resolution through mediation (Prattis 1978:10). The mediators which will be of particular significance to this analysis are those of the trickster and his logical counterpart the hero.

For Lévi-Strauss the trickster acts as a mediator in myth because "his mediating function occupies a position halfway between two polar terms [therefore] he must remain something of that duality – namely an ambiguous and equivocal character" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:226).

Notably, though, says Lévi-Strauss, the trickster is not the only mediator in myth. In the Americas, also included are the twins, who are the weakest of the lot, the messiah, who unites opposites and, as mentioned, the trickster, in whom opposites are held juxtaposed. The twins "bring opposites into association but at the same time leave them individually distinct;" thus their mediating function is a weak one, and, for the most part, they fail to overcome the paradox which the myth seeks to resolve (Lévi-Strauss 1976:166). The trick-

ster, by juxtaposing the opposites, attempts to resolve them but also fails. By bringing the opposites into union, the messiah, it would seem, would resolve the contradictions in the myth. However, Lévi-Strauss does not say this, even though by implication it seems to be a conclusion which can be drawn from the analysis; a conclusion which, I might add, will be potentially significant later on.

The function of mediator is not solely to point to a logical contradiction, but also, in some cases, to exhaust "all the possible solutions to the problem of bridging the gap between two and one" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:226). In this way his appearance signals that a resolution is being sought within the domain of a primary code and, resultant upon the success of the mediation — as signalled by the presence of twins, trickster, or messiah — a new code may or may not be entered into. Thus the mediator also defines the nature of subsequent codes in which mediation is sought (ibid.:226-227).

Within the literature, Nanabozho has been viewed as a trickster, culture hero, hare, giant, devil, the source of life and messiah. This is because of the fact that most researchers — as previously discussed — have chosen to focus on one or the other aspect of his personality. Broadly defined, therefore, his mediating role in myth may be characterized as multifunctional, although, as will be pointed out, the myth addresses itself to a central contradiction. (This hypothesis is explored at length in the following section.)

Once having established the diachronic level of the myth — as presented in de Jong's account, which is to follow — by delineating the mythemes, i.e., the units of contrast within the myth (the opposites), the synchronic dimension, or underlying structure is revealed through certain codes: sexual, genealogical, cosmological, economic, geographical and zoological. Moreover, for the entire sequence of the myth, three periods are discernible.

Notably, the logic underlying the myth is present not only within each code, but within the myth as a whole as well. This is expressed in the relationship between the three periods, each of which articulates the myth's central contradiction. By repeating this contradiction throughout the three periods, the myth's "slated structure" is revealed. However, Lévi-Strauss notes that "the slates are not absolutely identical. And since the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction . . . a theoretically infinite number of slates will be generated, each one slightly different from the others" (Levi-Strauss 1963:229). As will be elaborated more fully further on, the repetition of the myth's central message, as given by the various slates presented, is developed throughout the three periods in a progressive fashion, so that by the myth's conclusion it has been effectively transmitted. In the analysis which follows, three such slates are examined, which when viewed in relation to one another, reveal an underlying logical structure.

**The Myth**

One well-known series of tales relating Nanabozho's adventures can be divided into three parts: (1) Nanabozho's birth and early adventures, (2) the "Jonah" incident and the battle with an enemy across the waters, and (3) the death of Wolf and the flooding and re-creation of the world. This tripartite division is evident in many of the sources which have been collected (Messer 1983).

These episodes, commonly told as a unit, have been collected on numerous occasions, either in whole or in part. However, only one of these accounts will be utilized in the analysis which follows. Certainly, Lévi-Strauss acknowledges that all versions of a myth are submissible to analysis, but because of the rigour involved in such an exercise (which Lévi-Strauss himself admits is problematic) for pragmatic reasons this paper will restrict itself to a single version. Thus the version of the myth collected by J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong (1913) has been chosen because it represents a complete account, supplied by native raconteurs, of the sequence of events previously described. The rendition collected by de Jong was transcribed in the native language and later translated into English – his original intent had been to supply an orthography of Objibwa grammar. When compared to other known versions of this part of Nanabozho's adventures, de Jong's account agrees in all essential respects. Notably this sequence is well known among the Algonkian Indians, although, because of its length and complexity, complete versions were only infrequently obtained.

Chronologically, the series of events to be analyzed unfolds in the order of Nanabozho's birth, the Jonah and the enemy on the island incidents, and finally the re-creation of the world, in the time of origins. These three periods have been separated in this paper and designated as *periods one, two, and three* respectively – primarily for purposes of analysis.

Collected in the summer of 1911 at Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota from Eskwegabaw and Debeizig, both native raconteurs, and translated by Joe Roy, the tale is as follows (de Jong 1913:iii-iv). (For a verbatim transcription of the myth refer to Appendix 1. Specific references to the complete text are noted by line numbers in the paper.)

*Period One*

The story begins with an old woman and her daughter. The daughter is warned by her mother not to face in a certain direction. The young woman violates her mother's prohibition and is impregnated as a consequence. Within her womb twins fight for the right to be the first to emerge. In giving birth she dies. Her mother discovers one of her offspring, a rabbit who retrieves fire from some Indians. The grandmother makes a sweat lodge for

the rabbit who turns into Nanabozho when he emerges from it.

Nanabozho's grandmother tells him that it is his twin brother Flint who killed his mother during childbirth. Nanabozho finds Flint who is using an axe to shave flint chips from his shins. He tricks Flint into revealing what will kill him. Using small stones he succeeds in chipping pieces from his brother's body until he perishes.

*Period Two*

Nanobozho's grandmother tells him that his grandfather has been killed by a supernatural being known as Whale. Nanabozho sets off in his canoe and, along with a squirrel is swallowed by the whale. Using a knife he cuts pieces from the whale's insides until it is killed. Nanabozho brings the whale to his grandmother who makes oil from the carcass. He next loads the fish oil into his canoe and sets off across the water but is trapped in some pitch. Using the fish oil Nanabozho frees his canoe and arrives at the home of his brother. They do battle and Nanabozho kills him by shooting an arrow into the knot of his hair.

*Period Three*

Nanabozho encounters a wolf pack and hunts with them (he is first transformed into a wolf). When it is time to part one of the young wolves is left in his company (referred to as his ''nephew''). Nanabozho has a premonition and warns Wolf never to jump across a stream. Wolf violates Nanabozho's warning and falls into the water where he is taken by the underwater manidos. Nanabozho meets Kingfisher who tells him of Wolf's fate and indicates where the underwater manidos emerge from the water. He goes to this spot and transforms himself into a tree stump. The underwater manidos emerge and test the stump which they suspect is Nanabozho. After assuring themselves that it is not him they lie down and go to sleep whereupon Nanabozho reverts back to human form and shoots the chief. The underwater manidos flee into the water.

Nanabozho next meets an old frog woman who instructs him in the techniques which she is to use to heal the wounded chief. Nanabozho kills her and dons her skin as a disguise. He goes to the manidos' camp and is taken to the lodge of their chief. Here he kills him by pushing the protruding arrow further into his body. As a consequence the flood waters rise and Nanabozho flees from the underwater manidos' camp, taking his nephew's skin with him. The world is inundated and Nanabozho and some animals seek refuge on a raft. Breathing on his skin, Nanabozho brings Wolf back to life. The animals on the raft dive for some earth but only muskrat succeeds. With the bit of earth retrieved Nanabozho re-creates the world.

The series of events presented here represents only part of the mythol-

ogy dealing with the adventures of Nanabozho in Ojibwa folklore. Other stories of his escapades are well known. These are largely of a trickster variety in which he is presented as a deceiver, a dupe and a fool. In addition, a number of tales tell of Nanabozho's prowess as a transformer, with the ability to change the face of nature. For the purposes of analysis, however, only the previous episodes will be examined. The reason for this is that these events illustrate a structural relationship which demonstrates the multi-mediational ability — as per Lévi-Strauss' understanding of the function of mediator in myth — of Nanabozho within the native tradition.

An interesting feature of de Jong's account, and one which is significant to the analysis which follows, is the recounting of the theft of fire incident. Functionally, this part of the myth is the same as the killing of Nanabozho's brother Flint also in period one. As noted, in de Jong's account a rabbit is responsible for bringing fire to mankind, which is then distributed among the people. Mac Linscott Ricketts observes that this is the "earliest and most typical kind of Trickster-Hero myth" (Ricketts 1964:589). His claim is corroborated by the fact that Nanabozho is seen as a rabbit — or, typically the Great Hare — in the earliest sources available on him. However, in the vast majority of the recent accounts Nanabozho appears as an anthropomorphic being. This is significant because in his battle with Flint, his evil twin brother, Nanabozho gives Flint — a cultural instrument — to mankind. As Schoolcraft notes, flint among the Ojibwa was used for making fires: "Fragments were cut from [Flint's] flesh, which were transformed into stones, and [Nanabozho] finally destroyed [him].... All the flint stones which were scattered over the earth were produced in this way, and they supplied men with the principle of fire" (Schoolcraft 1969:317; see also Densmore 1929:142-143; Jenness 1935:16). In this way, two mythic events account for the culture hero's role in the origin of fire. In the one, however, Nanabozho is viewed theriomorphically, while in the other, he is viewed anthropomorphically.

Ricketts claims that among the "*ancient* Algonkian Indians [Nanabozho] was the 'Hare.' Among the modern Algonkians ... he usually appears as an anthropomorphic being..." [emphasis mine] (Ricketts 1966:328). Consequently, in de Jong's account an intermingling of two tales has occurred, which is by no means uncharacteristic of Ojibwa folklore. The reason for this can be partially accounted for by the nature of story-telling among these Indians, which was of an episodic nature (Skinner 1913:5), where tales told as discrete units could, and often were intermingled with other tales (Kirk 1970:75). Here, an older Algonkian concept — the theriomorphic trickster-hero — has been mixed with a newer one — his anthropomorphic form. Margaret Fisher notes that even the oldest available versions of Nanabozho's early adventures "have a composite character" (Fisher 1946:231). The reason for this is due, as mentioned, to the influence

of ancient Algonkian concepts on the one hand, and Iroquoian ideas on the other. As Ricketts points out, "The Flint Man as the embodiment of evil in the world is a distinctly Iroquoian idea. . . . His presence in some versions of the birth of [Nanabozho] is due to the influence of the neighbouring Iroquois tribes" (Ricketts 1964:576).

Structurally these considerations may be said to have little import in terms of the analysis because, as Lévi-Strauss notes, a myth is made up of all its variants (Lévi-Strauss 1963:217). Yet, the issue here is not one of variants, but rather the nature of the intermingling which has occurred, which, as noted, is of two similar events; i.e., both tales account for the origin of fire. In the one instance this occurs as a theft – which Ricketts notes is an ancient theme – and in the other as an act of vengeance which is more characteristic of the other episodes of the myth. Furthermore, as the myth itself affirms, the rabbit is not referred to as Nanabozho; it is only after repeated sweat baths that the latter emerges as the myth's central protagonist (line 65). Here, as Alexander observes, the fact that the rabbit is referred to indicates that there is a tendency on the part of the native raconteur "to anthropomorphize the Great Hare [the rabbit] or to assimilate his deeds to an anthropomorphic deity" (Alexander 1916:297).

Given these considerations, then, only Nanabozho's battle with his brother Flint will be analyzed in the next section because: (1) the theft of fire and the death of Flint episode serve the same function, namely, to account for the cultural use of fire, and (2) those passages in the myth which describe the theft of fire incident belong to the oldest part of the native tradition and differ from the more recent accounts where Nanabozho is viewed anthropomorphically. In view of what Fisher has said concerning the composite nature of periods one and two, and considering Rickett's observation of the Iroquoian influence on Ojibwa tradition, the deletion of the theft of fire incident from the first period is required in order to (1) avoid mixing myths from different eras which deal with different mythological figures (i.e., Hare, Nanabozho) (Chevalier 1979:146), and (2) analyze the logical structure developed in response to outside influences, namely the Iroquoian influence which Ricketts and Fisher have singled out. For these reasons, in the analysis which follows, it will be necessary to draw upon mythological material from other accounts to elaborate on de Jong's version. This procedure is meant not so much as a corrective as a check on the validity of the accounts provided.

## The Analysis

### *Sexual and Genealogical Codes*

Themes addressing sexual and kin differentiations abound in the myth and are manifest in a logically structured manner.

The story begins with the rape of a woman when Nanabozho's mother is ravished by the wind, an event which is not atypical within Ojibwa society where neighbouring bands frequently spirited away one another's females (Landes 1938:30). As Landes observes, however, illegitimate children, as in this case, were held in some horror (Landes 1937a:17), and yet paradoxically so, because twin-births were also regarded as sacred; the children thus born were said to enjoy an intimate relationship throughout their lives (Hilger 1951:30). Here, however, this is not the case, and Nanabozho and his brother Flint are at odds from the outset. In the other periods, too, Nanabozho has skirmishes with a variety of foes who, in one way or another have aroused his ire, necessitating his fulfillment of the Ojibwa credo that personal affronts be avenged according to the *lex talionis* – "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Kinietz 1947:84-85).

A pattern which appears in each of the three periods is that of a warning which is violated precipitating the demise or near demise of the person being warned.[3] In the first period a young girl is warned not to face in a certain direction.[4] In the second a grandmother tells her grandson about the killers of her relatives, warning him of the danger involved in their pursuit. In the third period an uncle cautions his nephew about crossing a body of water, no matter how harmless it may appear.

Notably, the second period of de Jong's account does not make the grandmother's warning to Nanabozho explicit. However, the versions collected by Friedl (in Barnouw 1977), Leekley (1965), Reagan (1928), Ritzenthaler (1970), Coleman et al. (1971), Jones (1917) (two versions) and Blackwood (1929) do. Also, in the versions collected by Schoolcraft (1839, 1969, 1971), Radin (1914), Speck (1915), Jones (1917) and Reagan (1928), Nanabozho's grandmother warns her daughter about facing in a particular direction and not a supernatural being, as in de Jong's account.

With these considerations in mind, a structural relationship between the three periods may be established as follows. In the first period a female-female warning takes place between a mother and her daughter who, among the patrilineal Ojibwa, are of different lineages, but closely related by blood. In the third period, conversely, a warning is issued by one male to another when Nanabozho warns his nephew about the underwater manidos. This warning takes place between members of the same lineage, who are relatively distant consanguineous kin (de Jong renders *Odoziman* as "nephew," which is more precisely translated as parallel nephew) (Baraga 1966; Landes 1937a:9-10). The second period presents an intermediary situation in which Nanabozho's grandmother – a female – warns her grandson – a male – about the dangers involved in pursuing those who have killed his relatives. This warning takes place between members of different lineages who are, however, two generations removed. In the myth these warnings correlate with

the death of a female in childbirth, the death of a male at the hands of the supernatural beings of the underwater world, and the near death of the hero by his powerful enemies.[5]

Briefly stated, the first period is the inverse of the third, while the second presents an intermediary situation which combines features of both the first and third periods. This pattern of inverted opposites in the first and third periods and an intermediary situation in the second is evident throughout the myth and results from the fact that the three periods represent permutations of one another, their purpose being, as Lévi-Strauss notes, to repeat the message being transmitted by the myth, which, as will be extensively documented in the analysis to follow, concerns itself ultimately with the reconciliation of the tension between life and death.[6]

When viewed in terms of kin relations, period one ascribes the indirect killing of Nanabozho's mother to a close male kinsman, i.e., her son Flint, while inversely, period three relates the killing of Nanabozho's nephew to a distant – i.e., not directly related – creature. Period two again presents an intermediary situation where members of Nanabozho's family are killed by a large fish – i.e., a distant creature – and by someone across the waters, who, in the versions collected by de Jong (1913), Coleman et al. (1971), Friedl[7] (in Barnouw 1977), Jones (1917) (two versions) and Ritzenthaler (1970), is also referred to as Nanabozho's brother, hence, a close male kinsman.[8] (The death of a member of Nanabozho's family is also credited to the enemy across the water in the versions collected by Friedl (in Barnouw 1977); Jones 1917 (two versions); Leekley 1965; Ritzenthaler 1970; Reagan 1928; Coleman et al. 1971; and Schoolcraft 1839, 1969, 1971.)

The first period of the myth describes a hostile relationship between male kin which results in the death of a relative when Nanabozho kills his brother Flint in revenge for the death of his mother, thus violating his kinship ties through fratricide.[9] Here Nanabozho remarks that "they are of all kinds [... even people who are related] who are fighting" (lines 107-109), thus affirming that even among those who are close kin and of the same descent, fighting can erupt and death become the unfortunate outcome.[10] Certainly in-group antagonisms, such as those spawned by competition between brothers, was not an infrequent occurrence among the Ojibwa, and especially, as Dunning observes, among older and younger brothers (Dunning 1959:88-89). Here, though, a younger brother (and theoretically the weaker of the two) proves victorious over his older brother Flint. In the third period this situation of brotherly hostility is done away with, and instead a peaceful coexistence between an uncle and his theriomorphic nephew occurs, an inverse of the situation in the first period. In this instance a close male kinsman is also killed, but this time by a member of another group, i.e., that of the Frog-Woman, who Nanabozho refers to as "grandmother," a kinship term which,

among the patrilineal Ojibwa, designates the female of the second "ascending generation regardless of line," including mother's mother, mother's mother's sister, father's mother, and father's father's sister.[11] Here the myth affirms that those who are unrelated can also kill one another and be viewed as enemies. However, in the third period these events are inverted, and instead of Nanabozho killing his nephew, Wolf is murdered by those of another group. In the second period Nanabozho is himself nearly killed by the large fish and by a supernatural enemy — who some versions refer to as Flint — thus presenting an intermediary situation where those within and outside of the group can threaten one's existence.

Many ethnologists have observed that it is typical of the Ojibwa to repress feelings of ill will towards their neighbours. This applies particularly to relationships between brothers and between uncles and nephews, as Hallowell observes:

> There is considerable emphasis laid ... upon the solidarity of brothers.... This means that quarrels between brothers ... are more shocking than those between cross cousins. And since the relation between a man and his mother's brother ... is a highly formalized one requiring at all times a display of respect and even continence of speech, this type of habitual attitude ... inhibits aggression. (Hallowell 1955:280)

In this instance, though, the mythology affirms that hostilities can occur not only among those who are outsiders, such as neighbouring tribes and villages, but even within the immediate family (Landes 1937b:102).

At the root of this repressed rage lies the individualism which epitomizes Ojibwa culture, as well as the feeling of pride and shame which underlay all social relations. Thus, in Nanabozho's quest for revenge the shame of having his relatives murdered spurs him to action, while pride earmarks his victories over his adversaries (Landes 1938:193ff.). These same feelings cause the individual to be wary in his dealings with others, ever on guard for the least slight to character, whether given or received, real or imagined. As a result, not only are repressed hostilities frequently seething below the surface, but feelings of persecution over the intentions of others as well (Barnouw 1955:345). To this extent, the warnings issued in the myth tell of the potentially hostile environment in which the Indian exists and of which he must be ever wary (Barnouw 1950:72).

As with many semi-nomadic peoples, competition for scarce resources was an accepted part of life. Throughout the three periods we hear the constant refrain of Nanabozho's desire to revenge himself for the deaths of his relatives.[12] At the same time, it is also evident that Nanabozho wishes to be the most powerful of beings, as the raconteur of de Jong's narrative acknowledges, he "killed every one who might have more supernatural power than

he'' (lines 196-197). Echoed in this theme of power, its quest and attainment, is the social atomism and rugged individualism which characterized traditional Ojibwa culture, where in eking out an existence from the harsh environment the lone hunter and his household became the paragon of Ojibwa identity.[13] As Landes observes:

> [The] hunter's lone pursuit of game in the winter [is] perfectly consistent with the game resources of the region. For there is little game, and at any locality hunting or trapping cannot be carried on by more than one man. The household which is fed by the proceeds of one man's hunting must of necessity be small. (Landes 1937b:124; cf. Barnouw 1955:341)

Certainly Nanabozho's actions in the myth hold true to this pattern. Yet at the same time he also functions as a mediator in the myth by pointing to contradictions within native schemes of reference, articulating these as polarities, and attempting to reconcile their antithetical positions through the mediation of the real life conflict which they address.

In the first period Nanabozho is the twin brother of Flint, while in the third he is referred to as Wolf's uncle. However, the renditions of the myth collected by Ritzenthaler (1970), Radin (1914), Hindley (1885), Jenness (1956), Coatsworth (1979), Ellis (1888) and Judd (1901) describe Wolf as Nanabozho's brother. This relationship is further corroborated in the accounts given by Barnouw (1977), Schoolcraft (1839, 1969, 1971), Coleman et al. (1971), Reagan (1928), Speck (1915) and Brown (1944) where three, and sometimes four brothers are born from the mother – typically Nanabozho, Wolf, Flint and a fourth.[14] Notably, too, de Jong's version states that Nanabozho and the enemy across the water are ''brothers'' (line 175). In some versions the latter is referred to as Flint, thus making him Nanabozho's twin. On this point Alexander claims that Wolf and Flint are actually one and the same person, who, for etymological reasons have been cast in separate roles (Alexander 1916:298). Hewitt takes up on this by adding that a confusion between the terms for Flint (*ma'halic*) and wolf (*malsum*) gave rise to the two figures being described as twins in some versions of the myth (Hewitt 1910:19).

It is interesting to note that for Lévi-Strauss, as mentioned previously, twins as mediators function to bring opposites into association. In doing this, however, they leave them individually distinct. Also, as noted, mediators emerge when the myth's logical contradictions remain unresolved. Within the three periods the tension which exists between members of the same and outside groups, as expressed by the fatalities which occur, are articulated via the twins, who prove unsuccessful in resolving the contradiction which underlies the tension. In the initial part of each of the three periods this tension is expressed primarily in terms of kinship categories, where both those

within and those outside one's group, those of the same and those of different descent, perish. As noted, this tension between kin is not atypical within Ojibwa society, and Nanabozho, as the myth's central mediator, seeks to reconcile these opposites. Yet the tensions within society which pit kin against kin and non-kin remain. As the twin brother both of Flint in the first period (and some versions of the second, where the enemy across the water is identified with the latter) and Wolf – by some accounts – in the third, Nanabozho is unsuccessful in his bid at reconciling this opposition. As a consequence, in bringing these opposites into association, one of the twins perishes at the hand of both close and distant kin. At the same time, too, the life-death polarity remains unmediated.

Lévi-Strauss notes, however, that "a pair of twins is a sign of weakening in the functions of the mediator." In his analysis of Asdiwal, this becomes all the more clear "from the fact that, only shortly after their appearance on the mythical scene, the twins die..." (Lévi-Strauss 1976:166). Here, too, the twins (Flint and Wolf) are killed. Nanabozho also comes close to death at the hands of the large fish and the enemy across the water, but as the myth's central mediator (and the hero of Ojibwa folklore) he survives, persisting in his attempts at reconciling the myth's central contradiction.[15]

Lévi-Strauss asserts that the dialectical structure of myth, in seeking mediation of its contradictions through a third term, generates – if the mediation is unsuccessful – a "chain" of mediators who attempt to resolve the opposing positions. In this chain-like structure mediators "of the first order, of the second order, and so on" appear (Lévi-Strauss 1963:225). As Lévi-Strauss notes, the reconciliation of the opposites may require many mediators, as well as many different dimensions and codes to address the contradictions (ibid.:226-227). So, too, in the mythology of the Ojibwa Nanabozho mediates between opposites posed in terms of several codes, the next of these being the cosmological and economic (see Figure 1).

### *Cosmological and Economic Codes*

Present throughout the myth and throughout each period is a three-fold relationship played out in the sky, on the earth, and in the water between ordinary men, the gods (manidos) and the mediator between men and the gods, the half-god Nanabozho.

In Ojibwa cosmology manidos were supernatural beings who inhabited the sky, land, and water, and assumed diverse forms such as animals, rocks and the cardinal directions, to name a few. The word manido has been rendered variously as "spirit," "supernatural being" (Hallowell 1960:50, n. 33), and even "god," which one author claims seriously reduces "the combination of substance, power, and reality which the native word can

**Figure 1**
**A Structural Analysis**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Period 1** | | | |
| Female-female warning and violation (mother-daughter: different descent but close by blood) | female killed by her son | Flint responsible for death | Nanabozho kills Flint: He creates a cultural product at the cost of fratricide. |
| **Period 2** | | | |
| Female-male warning and violation (grandmother-grandson: different descent but two generations removed by blood) | near death of Nanabozho by distant creature and brother (in some versions) | Large fish and enemy across water responsible for death | Nanabozho kills fish: He creates a cultural product (fish oil – cooking) obtained through hunting. Nanabozho kills enemy: He creates a cultural product (scalp) obtained from war. |
| **Period 3** | | | |
| Male-male warning and violation (uncle-nephew: same descent but distant consanguineous ties) | Wolf killed by a distant creature | Chief sea lion responsible for death | Nanabozho kills Chief of Underwater Manidos: He loses a cultural product because of murder. |

express. For in the manito world, accessible only through the doorway of dreams, were vested all the powers that determined whether the hunter would survive or perish. To enter this world was to step into, and not out of, the real world'' (Dewdney 1975:37). Briefly put, manidos were persons of the ``other-than-human class,'' characterized as ``sacred,'' ``strange,'' ``powerful'' and ``remarkable'' (Hallowell 1960:44). In native cosmology the welfare of the Indians became irrevocably hinged to the benevolence of these beings, and because of this, conflicts between their world and that of men invariably arose.

Nanabozho's mother, as in many myths of the hero, is human and mor-

tal, while his father is supernatural, thus making him and his brothers demigods.[16] In period one the demigod Flint is chopped to death by his brother Nanabozho, while in period three the chief of the supernatural beings who resides in the underwater world is slain. As noted, the identity of the enemy across the water is sometimes equated with that of Flint, and, therefore, period two can be said to present an intermediary situation where a demigod — the enemy across the water — and a supernatural being — the large fish — are killed.[17]

To this point the myth has described the deaths of Nanabozho's brother, a large fish, an enemy, and a wolf. These have led to the creation of cultural items such as flint, fish-oil, scalps (not specified in de Jong's account but common in others) and a wolf-skin door covering.[18]

Flint, as previously stated, is instrumental in the making of fires; fish oil is used for cooking and for door coverings (Cooper 1936:3; Danzinger 1978:9-10; Densmore 1929:128; Ritzenthaler 1970:19). Scalps, taken by raiding warriors from enemies, were used in victory celebrations. Like hunting, warfare constituted an important part of Ojibwa culture, and scalps betokened valour and bravery on the part of the warrior (Reagan 1919:348; Danzinger 1978:24).

What is noteworthy in these incidents is that in vanquishing his enemies Nanabozho acts as a trickster; this is clearly evident in his battle with his brother Flint when he tricks him into revealing the agent which causes his demise (small stones). Similarly, Nanabozho dupes the enemy across the water into believing that harmless bulrushes will kill him (see Appendix 1) and he tricks the underwater manidos by disguising himself as the Frog-Woman and a tree stump (later to retrieve Wolf's skin). However, not only do these incidents present Nanabozho in his role as a trickster, but as a culture hero as well, insofar as the gifts of culture are presented to mankind when he creates, in the first period, a cultural implement (flint) by killing his brother (Densmore 1929:143). In period three he loses a cultural product — i.e., his nephew's hide — as a consequence of the murder of Wolf (Densmore 1929:27). In period two Nanabozho creates — initially — a cultural product (fish oil) which is used for cooking and obtained by means of boiling, i.e., through cultural processes (Densmore 1929:42). In the latter half of the period he creates a product derived from a human being — hair — which is obtained through warfare and used culturally, i.e., in the war dance ceremonial (Densmore 1929:135). Briefly, the first, second and third periods illustrate the creation of cultural products — flint, fish oil, hair, animal skins — which Nanabozho has wrested from the manidos, thus demonstrating how he functions as a culture hero in the myth, mediating between man and the gods, and nature and culture by giving the Indians those culturally transformed objects indispensable to their survival. Yet these occur as a result of the death

of his nephew and brother, again articulating, this time in terms of cosmological and economic codes, the myth's central contradictions, that between life and one of its necessary conditions, death.

While Nanabozho is the twin brother of Flint and Wolf (in some versions) in the initial segments of each of the three periods, as these progress his role as mediator changes to that of trickster and culture hero in response to the change within codes and the need to re-address the contradictions presented. As Lévi-Strauss notes, unsuccessful mediation of the myth's opposites requires that the mediator employed to reconcile their antithetical positions be changed. As a result, Nanabozho functions as a trickster and a culture hero in the latter portions of each of the three periods, mediating between men and the gods, and nature and culture by obtaining cultural gifts for mankind from (super)natural sources. However, the fact that both of his brothers die, resulting in cultural life, presents the following paradox: death in nature (a fish and a wolf) leads to life in culture. As a result, the maintenance of life presupposes the destruction of both human and animal forms. Consequently, animals must be killed for their skins, fish for their oil, and enemies because they threaten one's existence. These enemies can be kin and they can also kill kin, and it is in this way that the life-death dichotomy is made reciprocal between close kin and distant kin, and man and nature, inasmuch as each of these polar opposites can, and must, kill and be killed.

As already noted, in a society of semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers social tensions within and outside one's group inevitably arise when competing for nature's scarce resources (Barnouw 1950:15). At times these tensions can result in death, for reasons of greed related to the status of "first-born" (and hence the more powerful) or revenge over the death of a loved one — as the myth has demonstrated. Likewise the procuring of items of cultural value from natural sources often entails death, which occurs in a cultural context either through hunting, warfare, fratricide or murder. For Lévi-Strauss the trickster functions to bring the myth's opposites into juxtaposition, in this way bringing to the fore the distinction between what is natural and what is cultural: wolves exist in nature, but in the myth they can also act as one's relatives (a cultural designation); flint is derived from nature, but in the myth Flint is also the brother of Nanabozho (here too, a cultural designation). Nanabozho himself is an ambiguously cultural and yet natural being, living as a man and yet associating with animals such as wolves, fish, muskrats, frogs, beavers, otters and loons (Barnouw 1977:50-51; cf. Blackbird 1887:72). What is important to note, however, is that it is in functioning as a trickster that Nanabozho's heroism is made evident: mediating between men and the gods, and nature and culture by duping his would-be killers, he perseveres in his relentless quest for survival, killing his enemies, hunting for game, and revenging those who have been wronged (Ricketts 1966). In the

process, too, as the myth has demonstrated, mankind is benefited, for as Nanabozho observes in vanquishing Flint: "How could the human beings have been able to increase in the long run if . . . [such] a dangerous being . . . were allowed to live on" (lines 113-115). At the same time as he rids the world of these dangers Nanabozho also creates items of cultural value from their remains, thus contributing to life by providing for its preservation and prolongation. Yet still death is made the unfortunate outcome, and even in addressing the tensions in Ojibwa society which exist between kin and non-kin, that which exists in nature and that which exists in culture, the contradiction posed by the life-death polarity remains unresolved. Consequently, while the myth may perhaps come to terms with the nature-culture dichotomy (vis-à-vis the trickster-culture hero), it leaves unresolved the paradox of life and death in relation to the kin-non-kin and man-nature linkages.

*Cosmographic and Zoological Codes*

All three periods describe an initial warning which correlates with the death or near death of a male or female. The cause of death in the first period is the birth of twins, precipitated by Nanabozho's brother Flint, who, in de Jong's version of the myth, is associated with the north (lines 75-76). This supernatural impregnation is, in some instances, initiated from above by the wind or by the sun, who, according to de Jong, resides in the south (line 4). In the third period an inverted situation occurs where the cause of death comes from below, the domain of the underwater manidos.

This cosmographic schema can be viewed in terms of both horizontal and vertical components where, on the horizontal plane Nanabozho kills Flint in revenge for the death of his mother on land, and on the vertical he slays the underwater manidos by descending from land to the bottom of the water. In period two, both a horizontal and vertical dimension are evident, where Nanabozho travels horizontally across the water to the home of his enemy and vertically inside the large fish from the surface of the water to the bottom.

What is noteworthy in the third period is that the Kingfisher, Frog-Woman and flood sequences act as semi-independent units, and possess their own structure, phrased in terms of oppositions, correlations and mediations. Typically, if only the Kingfisher episode is presented, exclusive of the Frog-Woman series, the flooding of the world follows immediately upon the shooting of the manido. This is found to be the case in the versions of the myth collected by Blackbird (1887), Radin (1914), Wilson (1886), Kohl (1860) and Ratzenthaler (1970). However, in de Jong's account, and others, the initial shooting of the manidos precipitates only a minor flood — if one occurs at all — and the actual deluge comes only after Nanabozho has tricked the Frog-Woman into revealing the location of the wounded chief whom Nana-

bozho quickly dispatches. As Fisher observes: "Some versions have the deluge follow immediately on the wounding of the manitou. Other versions place the flood after the manitou has been killed. Still other versions have the waters rise and then recede after the wounding with the true deluge occurring after the death of the manitou" (Fisher 1946:231-232, n. 12). This structural feature allows the myth once again to address the major dilemma which has unfolded to this point, that being how to reconcile the contradiction which exists between life and death.

With this problem in mind, the following structural relationship emerges: Kingfisher, a creature of what may be called the "lower" sky – as he spends the major part of his time on land searching for fish – stands in an inverted relation to the Frog-Woman, who is an emissary of the upper reaches of the underwater world, as frogs never stray far from the water's surface. An intermediary situation can be said to occur when the raft containing Nanabozho and the animals is on – but not in – that water and yet above the land (i.e., the old earth) but not in the sky – a position between the cosmographic domains which Nanabozho is called upon to mediate in this final part of the myth. To facilitate this reconciliation of opposites, various animals are employed who are themselves of both worlds. Thus Kingfisher resides in the upper reaches of the earth and yet preys on those in the water. It is his information which brings Nanabozho to the spot where the underwater manidos emerge (lines 236-237) and leads, in some versions of the myth, to the inundation of the world. The Frog-Woman, too, is a creature who mediates between land and water, and provides Nanabozho with the important information concerning the location of the wounded chief. But, ultimately, it is the earth-divers who provide the medium by which life is restored. In order to enlist the aid of these various animal mediators Nanabozho must make use of his powers of trickery and deceit.

Lévi-Strauss has pointed out that the trickster in myth places opposites in juxtaposition. This aspect of Nanabozho's personality is manifest in period three when he tricks the underwater manidos by changing himself into a tree stump. As their leader observes: "Nanabozho has all kinds of tricks" (line 247). Similarly, Nanabozho tricks the Frog-Woman into telling him the location of her village and teaching him her medicine songs. In the former instance his disguise – as a tree stump – signifies that, in some sense he is dead, and yet still very much alive – this is part of the deception which he performs. So too, in the Frog-Woman sequence his disguise indicates that he is dead, inasmuch as it is only the skin of the actual person which actually hides him (cf. Radin 1956:128). In both cases, though, death is presented as an illusion, where what is dead may really be alive, what is alive may be dead, and, furthermore, what appears to be harmless may actually be quite harmful.

In the flood sequence each of the earth-divers drowns and is then brought back to life again. These animals, significantly, are all amphibians — beaver, otter, loon, muskrat — and to this extent can be viewed as mediators between land and sky, and water and land, respectively. However, in the myth's final sequence Nanabozho does not deceive, but is, in a sense, deceived, in that Muskrat, the smallest of the divers and least likely to succeed, is successful in retrieving some earth from the bottom of the water. Here, as in Nanabozho's disguise as a tree stump and the Frog-Woman, appearances prove to be deceptive, and, in deceiving, one must be careful not to be deceived. Thus whereas the Kingfisher and Frog-Woman sequences present similar tricks in relation to the life-death theme (i.e., dead stump which is actually alive and live Frog-Woman who is actually dead) leading to the destruction of the world, the flood sequence shows Nanabozho being deceived by Muskrat (who dies and is then brought back to life again) resulting, however, in a fortunate outcome. Just as Muskrat appears unlikely to succeed in his task, so too was Flint, the large fish and the powerful enemy across the waters. As in this instance, appearances prove deceptive, and, consequently, the seemingly weaker protagonist prevails over his adversaries, a theme which runs throughout the myth and which is prevalent in Ojibwa folklore.[19]

In the world view of these Indians metamorphosis was a contingency for which one must be ever on guard.[20] In fact, "the whole socialization process in [Ojibwa] culture impresses the young with the concepts of transformation and of power, malign or benevolent, human or demonic. These concepts underlie the entire Indian mythology" (Hallowell 1960:38). To this extent one is never sure of the power possessed by others, and therefore caution is advised in all relations: "What looks like an animal, without great power, may be a transformed person with evil intent.... Caution is necessary in social relations with all classes of persons" (Hallowell 1960:39-40). This dictum holds especially true in the case of Nanabozho who proves that he is the most powerful of beings in his battles with his adversaries, even though he is presented in the role of the underdog. So too is the least likely of the earth-divers successful in his mission. Within Ojibwa cosmology trickery can take many forms, but ultimately it is linked to this notion of metamorphosis, where both men and animals may possess unexpected power, as evidenced in the case of Nanabozho and the animal mediators.

For the Ojibwa the land-water dichotomy constituted an important part of their world view, according to which those existing in the underwater world stood in an opposite and negative relation to the inhabitants of the land (cf. Kohl 1860:325). To a culture which populated the woodlands of the Great Lakes this opposition was a very real one. That those who existed on land could not also live in the water was as self-evident a fact as that those of

the water were precluded from residing on land. Men especially had to abide by this dictate, for to ignore it would bring death, as attested to in the myth by the fate of Wolf. However, at the same time a certain class of beings do not readily fit into either group. These are the animal mediators — beavers, otters, frogs and so on — who are employed by Nanabozho to provide the necessary channel between these conflicting and yet complementary domains. Thus Kingfisher and the Frog-Woman tell Nanabozho the location of the underwater manidos, facilitating his traversing of the two worlds, which leads ultimately to the destruction of the one. Contrariwise, in the sequence of events which relates the flooding of the world, the efforts of the animal mediators lead to a propitious outcome for the land-dwellers, and an unfortunate one for the beings of the underwater world, when their attempts at retaliation are thwarted by Muskrat.

As in his efforts to defeat those with more supernatural power than himself, here too the heroic aspects of Nanabozho's personality become evident, when he revenges himself of the death of Wolf and re-creates the world. In this instance he not only mediates between the domains of land and water, which are perpetually in conflict in Ojibwa cosmology, but between life and death as well. As a trickster Nanabozho places these opposites in juxtaposition — as entailed in the nature of his disguise — but achieves a mediation of the myth's central contradictions only in its final sequences when he restores Muskrat and the earth-divers to life (see Figure 2).[21] It is in this instance that he functions as a messiah who, for Lévi-Strauss, "unites" the opposites by reconciling the myth's ultimate contradiction and in the process re-creates the world (see Figure 3) (Densmore 1929:97; Barnouw 1977:252-253).

## Conclusion

As with any structural analysis of myth several interpretations are possible (Maybury-Lewis 1970:159). Certainly the analysis which has been presented here is no exception. This is not to say, however, that the structure which has been elicited is incorrect, but only that given the richness and complexity of the native lore much can be extracted from its study. What is important in this investigation, and what can be gained by it, is an understanding of the role which Nanabozho plays in the native tradition, as well as an appreciation of why he combines the apparently disparate traits of trickster and culture hero in one personage. Throughout the myth a change in Nanabozho's function as mediator has been evident — from twin, to trickster, to culture hero. Whereas the twins brought the opposites into association, the hero and the trickster went a step further.[22] This development culminates in the myth's finale where Nanabozho is again called upon to reconcile the myth's central contradiction.

**Figure 2**
**A Structural Analysis (continued)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Period 3**<br>Kingfisher: A creature of the lower sky | Nanabozho deceives through appearances: dead tree stump which is actually alive. | DEATH: Flood* |
| **Period 3**<br>Raft: Flooded land in sky. Earth-divers: Animals of land and water (amphibians) | Nanabozho is deceived: living earth-divers who only temporarily die. | DEATH: Drowning and revival (life) leading to new life through re-creation |
| **Period 3**<br>Frog-Woman: A creature of the upper water | Nanabozho deceives through appearances: living Frog-Woman who is actually dead. | DEATH: Flood* |

* A flood can take place at either of these points in period three.

**Figure 3**[23]
**The Resolution of a Contradiction**

| Initial Pair | First Triad | Second Triad | Third Triad | Resolution |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| LIFE | | | | LIFE |
| | Kin (death) | | | |
| | | Culture (death) | | |
| | | | Above (death) | |
| | Twins ······ | ·Trickster-Hero· ···· | Messiah· ····· | ·Rebirth and Re-Creation |
| | | | Below (death) | |
| | | Nature (death) | | |
| | Non-kin (death) | | | |
| DEATH | | | | DEATH |

In progressing through its various codes the myth articulates the basic opposition evident throughout between life and death. With each change in mediator a transformation in codes has taken place and mediation has been sought. In the case of the twins death resulted. For the culture hero death in nature led to life in culture, but so too did human death, namely, the killing of his brother and an enemy. This left the paradox of life and death unresolved, which was re-addressed by the trickster. But he too was unsuccessful in coming to terms with the myth's central contradiction, and the ruse which he

employs — and which others employ against him — precipitates disastrous consequences. Although his disguise as a tree stump and the Frog-Woman succeeds in duping the underwater manidos, the result is that the world is brought to an end, again pointing to the incomplete reconciliation of the life-death opposition. Yet in the conclusion of the myth these opposites are successfully resolved through a process of rebirth, in which Nanabozho, acting as a deceived messiah, restores Muskrat and the earth-divers to life and recreates the world (Lévi-Strauss 1978:32-33).

The major thematic elements present in the myth are given as sexual, genealogical, economic, cosmographic and zoological categories. These are expressed in terms of polarities: male-female, kin-non-kin, gods-men, natural product-cultural product, land-water, above-below, land creature-water creature. Each of these polar opposites defines a conceptual category which is articulated at the semiotic level via a code and through which the unconscious underlying message of the myth is transmitted.

As a mediator Nanabozho attempts to resolve the conflicting positions presented in the myth. Within the conceptual universe of the Ojibwa, contraries are phrased in terms of various categories. But contradictions exist within these categories only to the extent that they address genuine areas of tension within Ojibwa society, such as between kin and non-kin, nature and culture, and life and death.

The central contradiction between life and death is developed thematically through the use of various codes (these define the "slates" which appear in the myth). Within the three periods each code is transformed when mediation proves unsuccessful. Permutations occur among the three periods where the first and the third represent inversions of one another while the second presents an intermediary situation. The codes within the three periods are transformed when a new type of mediator is presented, who again seeks to address the ambiguities within the myth.

Kinship themes, as articulated by Nanabozho's relationship to those within and outside his group, are used to illustrate conflicts between those who are outside the family and those who are related by blood, both of whom can simultaneously kill and be killed. Consequently, brothers, mothers, nephews, grandfathers, and grandmothers perish, either for reasons of power, as in Flint's desire to be the first born, or revenge, as in Nanabozho's desire to rid the world of those who have done him an injustice.[24] At the root of this hostility is the rampant individualism which is endemic to Ojibwa culture, in which even the slightest affronts to character were seen as major transgressions against the person, often rectified by recourse to death.[25] The fatalities presented occur as a result of fratricide, murder, hunting and warfare, with the latter being an especially "important feature of traditional Ojibwa culture." Men waged war on their enemies to "avenge the combat deaths of fathers, brothers and uncles, and to annex new

hunting ground'' (Danzinger 1978:23; cf. Kohl 1860:390). As the myth has demonstrated, however, enemies can come from one's own family, as well as from other tribes (Densmore 1929:132).

The opposites of nature and culture, addressed by the cosmological and economic codes, proved to be contradictory in terms of the life-death polarity inasmuch as economic resources can be obtained from both natural and cultural sources, precipitating the death of both men and animals. A mediation between nature and culture is achieved when Nanabozho takes on the role of the hero. In this instance, man's economic well-being comes about not only by transforming that which exists in nature into cultural products, but also by eliminating economic rivals in order to add to one's material wealth. As a result, wolf skins and fish oil are procured from nature through hunting, while warfare and murder extract economic goods from those within culture, namely brothers and enemies (Danzinger 1978:23). As noted, however, the life-death polarity, which is the central contradiction being addressed, remains unresolved until the myth's conclusion. To complete the ''chain'' of mediation which Lévi-Strauss describes, a new type of mediator is required.

Kenelm Burridge observes that Lévi-Strauss' categories of life and death are contraries, but ''in what sense are they necessarily 'contradictions?' . . . 'Life and Death' are alternatives: either 'alive' or 'dead.' A 'real contradiction' would involve, at any level, the experience of 'life' and the experience of 'death' at one and the same time'' (Burridge 1967:112).

Burridge's point is well taken, but it ignores the fact that the contradiction in and of itself is not at issue in Lévi-Strauss' programmatic (in this instance) but rather its *resolution.* Thus the contraries of life and death become contradictory only to the extent that re-creation becomes possible or desirable. Certainly life and death are opposites, and to this extent also contrary, but they become contradictory only to a world view which concedes that the negation of life is a transitory phenomenon, and that new life is an immanent possibility. The ''message'' being transmitted becomes then: life and death are temporary states and because of their fluctuations present themselves ambiguously in culture, where what is alive can perish, and what is dead can lead to new life.

Entailed in this notion is the native concept of *pimadaziwin*, which designates life in its fullest sense, denoting longevity, health, and freedom from misfortune. ''This goal cannot be achieved without the effective help of both human and other-than-human ''persons,'' as well as by one's personal efforts,'' as has been demonstrated in the myth by Nanabozho and the animal mediators (Hallowell 1960:45). Among the Ojibwa, threats to one's health and well-being were an ever-present possibility. These could come from nature should, for example, supplies of game prove insufficient, as well as from one's fellow men, who competed with each other for nature's scarce

resources. It is not surprising then that tensions within society should exist in the relations between men and their environment, which, depending on circumstances, may be either malign or benevolent. Within the myth these cultural anxieties have been articulated and assuaged, to an extent, by the possibility of the restoration of life through rebirth and re-creation, which is allowed to both men and animals, as one informant observes: "Everything, trees, birds, animals, fish (and ... human beings also), return to life; while they are dead their souls are merely awaiting reincarnation" (Jenness 1935:21; see also Dewdney 1975; Hoffman 1891). In this way life and death are made only temporary interruptions in the ebb and flow of a set of universal processes which allow for the compatibility of these antithetical states (Barnouw 1977:252-253).

Yet, curiously, one is left with doubts as to the myth's success in resolving *all* of the contradictions which it has presented, for in its final passages a wolf dies of old age and the hero, it appears, is resigned to roam about the earth, as if in pursuit of some final solution to what may be an irresolvable dilemma (lines 304ff.).[26] Confined to this apparent pattern of nomadism, the myth affirms that Nanabozho's pursuit of game and his battles with his enemies are inseparable from the endless round of life and death which goes on in spite of his best intentions. The story of the Ojibwa trickster-hero's exploits concludes without having fully eliminated the conflicts which appear in the myth between men and their struggle for survival, or having fully justified the necessity for man's killing his rivals in order to add to his material well-being. These remain as contradictions in their own right: if one is to prevail over the environment, one's relatives and fellow men must be killed. In spite of this, however, as the myth's central mediator, Nanabozho does hold out the hope for new life through rebirth and re-creation by offering an attenuated resolution to the myth's central contradiction.[27] From this point of view, trickster and hero represent stages in this process and highlight the ambiguous nature which Lévi-Strauss attributes to the Amerindian mediator figure, who in this instance combines roles of an antithetical nature — trickster and hero — as a logical consequence of his function within the myth.

In the structuralist's framework, trickster and hero are thus seen as two aspects of the same personality, as Lévi-Strauss notes: "Not only can we account for the ambiguous character of the trickster, but we can also understand another property of mythical figures the world over, namely that the same god is endowed with *contradictory* attributes ... [emphasis mine]" (Lévi-Strauss 1963:227). Consequently, trickster-like qualities of cunning and stealth can be associated with a mythological being as also can heroic attributes. These traits are a function of the type and degree of mediation being sought and point to the contradictory nature of not only the trickster-hero, but reality as well.

In a revealing passage from one raconteur's account of the myth, Nanabozho, in slaying the enemy across the water (who is his brother) says: "Now, therefore, this is what shall come to pass that people are to die.... Although one could bring it to pass that not till they have reached old age they should die, yet nowhere would they have room if this should take place. [Death] is only a change of going from one earth to another" (Jones 1917:21; cf. Jones 1917:39). Following the analysis which has been presented, in the myth death too is but a passage from one world to another, which is facilitated for the Ojibwa by the trickster-hero Nanabozho, who in the end shows them the way to new life through the symbolism of death and rebirth.

### Appendix 1

*Period One*

An old woman, it is told was [lit. is] living somewhere. Only her daughter was [lit. is] with her. Once this young woman was spoken to by somebody [this means: some invisible supernatural being]. This she was told. Whenever you go out, never sit with your face turned due south or west or north or east. Once
5 she forgot to do as she had been told and sat with her face due south. After some time she became aware of something alive within her body. And from this time she was steadily growing in size. So she was asked by her mother [and] she was told: what does this mean that you happen to be like this? And the young woman answered: I do not know how I come to be like this. And the
10 old woman said to her daughter: when this happens to somebody it is only because man and woman are together that it happens to her [lit. to somebody]. At last this young woman was unable to walk because she was too big. At this time they heard them talk [They heard one of them] saying: I shall be the eldest.[28] Again [another] one said [lit. says]: No, it is me who shall be the
15 eldest. The old woman hears that somebody speaks to her [and] tells her: Come, make your house strong, put many sticks all round and also on top.[29] So the old woman did. By this time they heard them talk and quarrel about which would be the first to go out. Finally they came to blows. Then [she was blown up and] it is absolutely unknown where that woman and the wigwam came
20 down. Only the old woman was left [lit. was there]. And that old woman cried. At a little distance [from the spot] she built a home again.[30] But once in a while of course she went crying to the spot where they used to live. Once going [thither again] she found a clot of blood of this size [here the narrator showed his thumb].[31] She took it and wrapped it up in birchbark. So at this time orig-
25 inated the way the Indian usually takes care of that what is called "the wrapping up at the head" when one of his relatives die [lit. so now it is from which originates the Indian who uses to take care of it some decayed (euphemism for deceased) relatives, that what is called, "the wrapping up at the head" (or "what is wrapped up at the head")]. So she wrapped that [clot of] blood up in
30 birchbark and put it under the place where she used to lay her head while sleeping [lit. whenever she sleeps]. Once while she sleeps she hears somebody talking to her, saying this: My mother, I arrive. And she woke up and looked under her pillow where she thought the sound came from and untied the birchbark.

Then she found there a little rabbit. Well, from that time she took care of him
35 and after some time he was getting a little bigger [lit. till after some time he
etc.]. And once, while she was sleeping again, she dreamt that somebody said:
Where shall we get the fire [from]? And she answered: [from] nowhere. But
about the time when it was getting towards autumn he spoke to her again: I had
better try to get it, and he also said to her: Put fire-wood ready at hand. And
40 then she saw the little rabbit going away and crossing the lake lengthwise, running on the surface of the water, until he arrived at the other side. There he sat
down quite near the water and when he had seated himself, the wind rose until
the waves were striking against his body. And he got wet through. Opposite the
spot where the little rabbit sat down [some] Indians were living. At this time a
45 certain young woman just happened to go out fetching water and saw the little
rabbit who was sitting near the water. This young woman thought the little rabbit nice, so she took him, wrapped him up and took him home. They were two,
these young women, at their home. When she came home she said to her sister:
Just look at him! They were overheard by their father and he said to them: He
50 does not look all right, that one! kill him! Over there on the earth that [creature] Nenabozo has been born by now, he has all kinds of tricks. [But] the little
rabbit, looking round, saw the fire. And suddenly the little rabbit made a spring,
grabbed the fire and ran away. And that old man tried to overtake him. Of
course (he) the little rabbit runs on the surface of the water but (he) the old man
55 is not able to run on the water (he too). So the little rabbit escaped. Once the old
woman [who had been looking out for him] saw that the little rabbit came running towards her and, when he arrived, threw the fire down [and then] he told
her: All right, [here it is], build a fire at once! So the old woman accordingly
built a fire. So then from that time they possessed the fire. A short time after
60 that the little rabbit spoke to the old woman [and] said to her: Please make a
sweating-lodge and heat stones.[32] So (truly) the old woman did. When she had
finished the sweating-lodge the little rabbit went in. After some time he spoke
to her from within the sweating-lodge [and] said: It is enough, uncover me!
And when she uncovered the rabbit who was sitting there he was very big.

65 Once he [Nenabozo] spoke to her [the old woman] again [and] said:
[Make a sweating-lodge] again please. And when she uncovered him (again)
after he had been sweating again, lo! there was sitting a boy. The old woman
was very proud of it and went and made a little bow [and arrows] for him. So
the boy was [always] wandering about, shooting arrows and frequently brought
70 little birds [home]. Once the boy said to her [the old woman] again: Make a
sweating-lodge again, please. And again he told her: Uncover me, please. And
when she uncovered him a tall man was sitting there. And now that man related
what had happened to them [him and his brothers] when they were going to be
born and who they were and also how their mother came to die, that it was the
75 North who killed her because he was nothing but flint. And also at this time the
man named himself [and] his name was Nenabozo. And now Nenabozo began
to interrogate his grandmother: Who is my father [, he said,] and who is my
mother and where is she?[33] But the old woman did not want to tell him. But
Nenabozo did not stop talking till at last his grandmother told him what had
80 happened to their mother that they had killed her when they were born and that
it was probably especially the North who killed their mother. When Nenabozo

heard that his mother had been killed he got angry. So presently he went away to look for his brother [the North]. When he was getting near the place where his brother was he heard him chopping at a distance. When he [Nenabozo] got
85 sight of him, lo! he [North] was standing thus [here the narrator showed how he was standing] and it was his shinbone he was hewing at [and] although he was chipping pieces off it, it was always keeping the same size. This is the work he was always occupied with. When he [Nenabozo] came to him, they shook hands [and] were very glad [to see each other]. When it was evening he [Nena-
90 bozo] went along with him to his [North's] home. And then they were sitting together, as if visiting each other, and during the night they did not sleep. At last he [Nenabozo] asked his brother: What will kill you, brother? [His brother] rather suspected him and did not want to tell him but he [Nenabozo] did not leave off till finally he [his brother] told him and said: Small stones, that is
95 what will kill me. And Flint [North] also asked Nenabozo: And what will kill you, brother? And Nenabozo answered: If I were repeatedly hit by an arrow with cedarbark for a point, it would kill me. Then they went to sleep. While his brother was sleeping Nenabozo went secretly out, gathered small stones and piled them up close by his [brother's] home. Then he went in [again]. And
100 when the day broke Nenabozo suddenly jumped up and said to his brother, at the same time giving a war-cry: Brother! they are attacking us. Then he jumped out repeatedly shouting war-cries ayi! ayi! ayi! And then the [other] one jumped out too and the moment he jumped out Nenabozo struck him with a stone [struck him, used a stone] and when he struck him a little piece of Flint
105 was chopped off. And [Flint] said to him: Heéeehé brother! you mistake me for an enemy! Why do you cry heéeehé [said Nenabozo], they are of all kinds [he means: even people who are related to each other] who are fighting! Then (also) Flint took a piece of cedarbark and put it in his arrow as a point and shot Nena-bozo [with it]. But he did not hurt him at all. And they were fighting the whole
110 day. At last, when it was nearly sunset, Nenabozo had chopped him to pieces [and so] he killed him. And when he had killed him he said: How would the human beings have been able to increase in the long run if this [state of things] existed [he means: if a dangerous being like Flint were allowed to live on]. Then he marched off and went home. And when he got home he told his grand-
115 mother that he had killed his brother Flint.

*Period Two*

Now and then when Nenabozo was walking about in the neighbourhood of their home he saw that the cuts in some of the stumps looked strong [as if done by a strong hand] and some looked weak. Then he asked his grandmother who had made those cuts that looked strong. Then his grandmother cried because he
120 asked her so and the old woman told Nenabozo that the one [[viz. who had made those cuts], her husband, had been killed by a supernatural being who lives in the water [and] whose name is Whale. Then he prepared to make a canoe and sharpened his axe and the sharpening sounded like this: Kos kos kos, kigá kigá kigá [means: your father (thrice), your mother (thrice)]. Then he
125 repeatedly struck his axe with a stone saying (at the same time): I hate him exceedingly because he says it on purpose to make me sad. Then he com-menced to make a canoe and after he finished it he said to his grandmother:

To-morrow I am going to look for him who killed our late father. Then he loaded many stones in his canoe and embarked.[34] And when he came far on the
130 lake he got up and sang (and he sang) this: Hullo! Whale! come, try to swallow me, you who killed my father! And the whale heard what Nenabozo was singing [lit. heard Nenabozo how he sings singing]. And the whale was told by his father: do not pay attention to his talking, that Nenabozo has supernatural power. And the whale said to his threshold, which is a big pickerel: you go and
135 swallow Nenabozo. So accordingly the big pickerel went. And Nenabozo really saw the water whirl round [and] looking in that direction he saw the big pickerel come with open mouth. Then he threw a big stone at him and the big pickerel was almost killed. Then he [the pickerel] went away. When he came to his master Whale he said to him: Impossible! Then he died. Now the whale got
140 angry. Well, now I shall go and swallow him [myself] said the whale. Do not! my son! that Nenabozo is a supernatural being indeed! the whale was told by his father. But nevertheless he went. So Nenabozo again saw the water whirl round and there he saw him: Ah! a great big one indeed! And then he was swallowed [canoe and all]. Then the whale went home again. When Nenabozo came
145 to his senses again he saw a squirrel sitting there and said to him: Youngest brother![35] how did you too come here? [lit. from where is he and also you that you are here]. And he [the squirrel] answered him: While I was swimming he swallowed him too. So there they were. While being there Nenabozo saw something hang that was moving and he asked the squirrel: What is that? And
150 the squirrel answered: I do not know what it is. (And) there in his canoe Nenabozo's knife was struck between the ribs and the bark [lit. was stuck between there at the rib]. He took his broken knife and cut off a little slice from [the thing] that was hanging [there]. Then the whale made this sound:hhh! and said! Ah! I feel very bad indeed! Then his father said to him: I told you all
155 along that he has got supernatural power, this Nenabozo. Of course Nenabozo and the squirrel were listening to them while they were talking outside. Then the whale swallowed lots of water [and said]: I had better throw him up! Now the whale vomited. So they were drawn towards [his gullet]. But Nenabozo threw his canoe crossways and then they clung to it. Oh! impossible! said the
160 whale. Yes, yes! I told you all along! his father said to him. Now they [Nenabozo and the squirrel] knew exactly [what] it [was] that was hanging [there].[36] Then Nenabozo took his knife and cut it to pieces. So the whale died. At a certain moment (being within) they noticed being tossed in a certain direction. So they thought: what is the matter! And Nenabozo got up and cut him open,
165 (there) right above his [Nenabozo's] head and, pulling the skin down, saw the sky: My younger brother, now we shall be saved [he said]. Then they got out. And he told the squirrel: Come, go home! and he himself too went home and told his grandmother to make lots of oil from the whale whom he had killed. And after it was finished he loaded it in his canoe and embarked.[37] As he was
170 going on it happened that his canoe did not move [any more] the passage being barred by pitch that was floating on the water [lit. there was the pitch lying across]. Then he first greased his canoe. After this it moved again. Three times he was stopped by the pitch [lit, three times the pitch was lying across]. Then he came to his brother. Then they sat talking together. Nenabozo said to him:
175 What would kill you brother? Nothing [he answered]. No, brother! For every-

body there is something that would kill him. Of course it was with reason that he did not want to tell him, of course he was a little afraid of him [and] for that reason he did not tell him. And what would kill you, brother? Nenabozo was told. Cat's tails will kill me [he answered]. Then they went to sleep. And in the
180 morning he [Nenabozo] attacked his brother fiercely, shouting . . . a noise like this, that is how the war-cry sounds. Now they began to fight. All day long Nenabozo was shooting arrows at him. And the other one (too) for his part was hitting him with cat's tails. But they did not hurt each other at all. When it was very near sunset Nenabozo had only three arrows left. Then a woodpecker flew
185 by and said, in passing: Probably Nenabozo thinks: I ought to kill him. [And then he said to Nenabozo:] If you only hit him where his hair was tied together then he would die. Then Nenabozo shot him near the spot where his hair was tied together.[38] And he [his brother] staggered. Then Nenabozo, shooting again just touched him [there]. Then [his brother] fell down and after getting up fell
190 down again and kept doing so [and he cried]: What are you doing, Nenabozo; it seems that you want to shoot me just there! Whenever there is a fight, the bullets are flying everywhere [Nenabozo answered]. Nenabozo had only one arrow left. So he carefully shot at him again [aiming at the spot] where his hair was tied together. And he hit him [there] and so he killed him. Then he told his
195 grandmother that he had killed his brother and so had killed every one who might have more supernatural power than he [Nenabozo]. So (then) there was nobody left who would be able to kill Nenabozo.[39]

*Period Three*

Walking about Nenabozo saw wolves running. Then he shouted to them [lit. he said to them shouting]: Stop! wait for me! So (truly) the wolves waited for him.
200 When he arrived he said to them: Where are you going? And those wolves answered: We are hunting. And Nenabozo said to them: Please, let me go along with you [lit. I shall go along with you}. And they answered him: You would not be able to keep up with us. And he told them: Please, make me look the same as you look. And they answered him: We could not do that; but Nenabozo
205 did not desist before he was transformed (in that way). Then they [the wolves and Nenabozo together] went on. By the time it was getting towards spring the old he-wolf [lit. old man wolf] said to him: Now we have to part with you but I shall leave this one of your nephew's [lit. this one your nephew] with you who is a skillful hunter. Then Nenabozo was satisfied. During the time Nenabozo
210 and his nephew were living there it was about getting towards summer. His nephew was a formidable hunter indeed. Once, while sleeping, Nenabozo dreamt that his nephew was taken away by supernatural beings.[40] Then he cried in his sleep, making a noise like this. . . . Though his nephew tried to shake him awake he could not wake him up till after a long while. I wish you would never
215 jump across anything like a stream [lit. please, never jump across anywhere if it is like a stream] [Nenabozo told his nephew] but after throwing little sticks [on it] [lit. first throw little sticks].[41] Not until then you may jump across but be sure to do it first even when it hardly looks like a stream. Shortly afterwards [the wolf] chased after deer. When he was about to strike [lit. to reach him with
220 his mouth] he saw there something looking like a stream. Come, never mind! he thought, I am about to reach him, anyway. Then he jumped to cross it [lit.

he jumped to jump across] [but] right in the middle of the river he fell. So then he was taken. Nenabozo followed the tracks of his nephew after he [his nephew] had stayed away over night. So he tracked him as far as the water.
225 Then he cried again and went about everywhere crying, in the wilderness. He did not go home. And somewhere he saw a kingfisher sitting in the water and looking steadily [at something]. Then, as he came near and tried to catch him, he missed him and he said (to him): I abhorred him, this one! What is this he is looking at? The reason that the kingfisher's feathers are standing straight up is
230 that he [Nenabozo] had got hold of him [for a moment]. Oh! [it is] Nenabozo! [the kingfisher said] I was going to tell him [something]. All right! my younger brother, tell it to me [said Nenabozo]. In exchange I shall make you (so that you are) most beautiful. I am looking at your nephew, who is being eaten, the kingfisher said, this is why I am looking. I shall teach you this: when it is a
235 warm day these supernatural beings leave the water [and then] the chief is usually lying there in the middle, that is the one who took him. Then he went away. Nenabozo transformed himself into a stump [on the spot] where they [the supernatural beings] usually left the water. Very old looked that stump [lit. it looks very old that stump that is what it looked]. Presently, as it was getting
240 warm, the water was really whirling round. And immediately afterwards big snakes began to crawl out and also bears and all kinds of water-animals [lit. all kinds that live in the water]. And presently he also, the one who had taken him [the wolf] appeared at the surface, far away in the water, as he was afraid to come ashore. Verily, he was beautiful, he looked like snow. It looked strange to
245 them, that stump that was standing there and, therefore, he was a little suspicious: Nenabozo has all kinds of tricks, this is not his real shape [he thought]. I used to see it formerly, [some of them] said and others: I never saw it. Please, Big Snake! go and press it! Good gracious! thought Nenabozo. Then he [the snake] wound his body several times around the stump and pulled himself
250 together. Nenabozo was just about to yell [with pain] when he loosened his embrace. It would be too much for Nenabozo to be the stump [they said]. You, bear! please go and scratch it, the bear was told. Then the bear walked up to [him]. Good gracious! [Nenabozo] thought. And then he scratched it. When he was about to make him [Nenabozo] squeal he let him alone. Nenabozo would
255 not stand it, they said. I used to see it formerly, some [of them] said. Then finally the chief left the water. Where they were lying, sunning themselves, he lay down right in the centre. I wish they would be sound asleep, thought Nenabozo. [They were.] Then he went stepping over those big snakes. And then he shot the chief with an arrow under his arm. Ah! Nenabozo kills the chief. Now
260 he roamed about. And then he made (there) a big raft in anticipation. Now he heard somebody coming singing. He went [to look]. Why! that old frog-woman with lots of bass-bark on her back.[42] What is your usual occupation, grandmother? Nenabozo has shot the chief with an arrow [and] I am called upon for help, I am the one who will doctor him, she answered. What do you sing when
265 you are doctoring, grandmother? Grandchild! you might be Nenabozo! Nenabozo will do you all kinds of harm if he sees you. He is angry because his nephew was taken away. Now she commenced to teach him how she usually sang: All over the world I am walking rattling, I am walking rattling, thus I sing, [and further:] I am slowly drawing out by magic the arrow of my grand-

270 child Nenabozo. Then he [Nenabozo] struck her dead. Then he skinned her neatly, put her skin on his own body [li. then he put it on], and loaded that bass-bark she had been carrying on his back. Now he went, singing as he went on. Of course they heard him from yonder [where the supernatural beings were]. And he was met by [some] children, [boys and] mixed up with them,
275 girls. Take me to the one I am going to doctor, grandchildren! my eyes are swollen with crying. Some of the boys said to him: Onabozo: they knew him a little. I shall stay here alone to doctor him, grandchildren! There his nephew's skin was covering the door. He puckered his lips as if to kiss him.[43] Then he mutilated him [the snake] internally with the arrow. That would kill him. Then
280 he ran away and he also tore his nephew's skin off [from the wall] and he unravelled the sewing of that frogskin. Ah! Nenabozo! [he is recognized now that he drops his disguise]. So he went and finished the chief. Now he went running to his raft. And just behind him the water flowed, flowing all over the world till they could not see the tops of the trees [lit. till the trees did not show
285 their tops]. Then all kinds [of animals] came swimming towards him. Those fur-animals, muskrats, beavers, otters, loons. All those who can stand long diving and also all different kinds of fur-animals. Now he breathed on his nephew's skin [lit. on his nephew]. Thus he brought him back to life and he [his nephew] looked just the same as before. Come! my younger brothers! fetch
290 some earth down there under the water, whoever will be able to do it. So then the beaver dived first. He did not quite reach the earth. Then he was drowned. Afterwards he appeared on the surface of the water. Then he [Nenabozo] made him alive by breathing on him, opened his hands and looked for earth. Of course there was nothing. Then (again) the otter tried to dive but he fared like
295 the beaver. Then the loon tried to dive but he too fared like the beaver. Then, as the last one, the muskrat was waving his tail and going noisily about and swimming around. Finally his tail slowly disappeared. Then he was gone. Now he saw the greenish looking bottom. When he was about to be drowned he reached the bottom and just when he was grabbing it he was drowned. When he came to
300 the surface of the water Nenabozo opened his hands. Truly he had a little earth in his hand. Then he spread the earth out. While drying it ever grew. When that earth had grown big he [Nenabozo] said to his nephew: Please, run round the earth. Only a little while he was gone. And he [Nenabozo] said: It would be too small [if I left it like this]. After a while [he said] again: Well! again please! So
305 the wolf went again. And he did not come back: he grew old and died before he could arrive; he went for ever. So now Nenabozo went roaming about everywhere.[44]


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## Notes

1. See Messer (1982:309-311) for a review of previous attempts to explain the trickster-hero paradox.
2. The latter procedure is best exemplified in Lévi-Strauss' *Mythologiques*, I-IV (cf. Leach 1970:67).
3. Cf. the works of Alan Dundes and Vladimir Propp on folk tale morphology.
4. See Ritzenthaler (1970:27-28) on pregnancy prescriptions: "... a child to be born of woman is preceded by its soul sent by the manitou; it enters its mother's womb. Without this, conception and birth are impossible...."
5. Cf. Chevalier (1979:155) on the logic of mythic periodization.
6. Lévi-Strauss (1963:229). See also Lévi-Strauss (1969b:199) on the notion of "message" and its relation to "codes."
7. In Barnouw (1977:77) the enemy across the water is referred to as "chopping-his-shins-with-an axe."
8. (Cf. Coleman et al. 1971:65.) "We [the authors] heard that later Nanabozho set out to find Flint, and Flint was expecting him. One narrator said, 'The youngest brother was sharp like a razor. He lived on an island, where he watched for Nanabozho. He was afraid of Nanabozho and he knew that he was coming, so he gathered pine pitch and put it in the water all around the island.' Here the powerful man [enemy across the waters] is identified as a brother of Nanabozho."
9. See Danzinger (1978:16) on the theme of revenge.
10. The Ojibwa practised patrilineal descent, preferring marriage with bilateral cross-cousins. Residence patterns were bilocal and neolocal. See Cooper (1936:4) and Danzinger (1978:10-11).
11. Landes (1937a:76). Among the sources collected for the Ojibwa of Minnesota, two refer to the healer of the manidos as an old woman and two as a frog-woman (two do not mention her at all). Among the four sources collected from the Wisconsin Ojibwa, three mention an old woman (one does not discuss her). For the Northern Ojibwa, one source mentions a toad and the other a toad-woman. In Ontario, one source mentions a serpent-woman, four an old woman, two a frog, and one an old woman who later changes into a frog. An additional four sources for the Ojibwa (which are of unspecified location) refer to an old woman (1), a toad (1) and an old woman who changes into a toad (1). (One source does not mention her at all.) (See here Messer [1983] for details on the various accounts of the myth.)
12. (Cf. Long 1904:115.) Referring to the Ojibwa he comments: "Is it then surprising that every action of their lives should tend to satisfy their thirst for revenging offenses committed against them, and that these sentiments should operate so powerfully in directing their future conduct?"
13. See Landes (1938:51) and Barnouw (1950:16). Barnouw quoting Margaret Mead notes: "Their [the Ojibwa's] highly individualistic way of life is completely congruent with the sparse distribution of game animals which makes it necessary for men to scatter widely for several months of the year." (Cf. Kohl 1860:327.)
14. On twin births see Hultkrantz (1979:38); Hilger (1951:30); Lévi-Strauss (1978:31-32). Note also Appendix 1 (de Jong), line 74, where the plural form Nanabozho and his "brothers" is used.
15. See Hilger (1951:4): "... it was believed that a child born with certain physical traits was not conceived in the normal way: it was considered reincarnated. Such traits were those of being born a twin...."
16. See Jenness (1935:29 cf. Coleman et al. 1971:57-58). See Ritzenthaler (1970:27; cf. Hilger 1951:30-31) and the versions of Schoolcraft (1839, 1969, 1971), Speck (1915), Radin (1914), Barnouw (1977), Jones (1917) and Reagan (1919).

17. See Coleman et al. (1971:56-57). De Jong (Appendix 1), lines 121-123, refers to the large fish as a "supernatural being."
18. Although de Jong's account does not describe Nanabozho's scalping his enemy, this occurs in the renditions provided by Friedl (in Barnouw 1977), Jones (1917), Michelson (1911), Reagan (1919) and Schoolcraft (1839, 1969, 1971).
19. Barnouw (1950:25): "Miscalculation of a person's strength is a common theme in the folklore. One simply never knows who is powerful and who is not, so it is better to be on the safe side and act politely to everyone. External qualities are not always adequate indications of a man's supernatural resources, and a man may not even know how much power he has himself." Cf. Densmore (1973:77-78) on the kingfisher.
20. Hallowell (1960:35): "The world of myth is not categorically distinct from the world as experienced by human beings in everyday life. In the latter, as well as the former, no sharp lines can be drawn dividing living beings of the animate class because metamorphosis is possible. In outward manifestation neither animal nor human characteristics define categorical differences in the core of being."
21. Muskrat's being revived is not specified in de Jong's account, but is found in the versions collected by Blackbird (1887), Barnouw (1977), Blackwood (1929), Reagan (1919) (three versions), Kinietz (1947), Jenness (1956), Ritzenthaler (1970), Jones (Rev. P.) (1861), Laidlaw (1915-22), Coleman et al. (1971), Ellis (1888) and Hindley (1885).
22. Cf. Hultkrantz (1979:38; 38, n. 26): "... the twins may be perceived as representatives of a cleft in the composite nature of the culture hero, or personifications of his two tendencies, one productive and the other destructive."
23. Figure 3 is modelled after Lévi-Strauss (1963:224).
24. Cf. Schoolcraft (1971) and his account of Nanabozho's fight with the west wind.
25. Landes (1937b:102): "Ojibwa life may be thought of as resting on three orders of hostility. All Ojibwa speaking persons feel a major hostility towards those of alien speech, epitomized by the Dakota Sioux. Next in order is the hostility that exists between different local groups of Ojibwa, and the third is the hostility felt by any household toward another, whether or not of the same village." Cf. Landes (1938:178): "The keystone of their culture which molds all personal actions and reshapes the cultural details that have been borrowed from neighbouring tribes, is individualism."
26. Cf. Barnouw (1955:349): "This restless and rootless spirit is characteristic of the narrative. A contrast may be noted with the origin legends of some sedentary societies (such as the Hopi) which change the point of origin of the human race to a specific locality. . . ."
27. Cf. Kohl (1860:392), Nanobozho speaking (he has just killed his son): "These are times of war. For the following centuries the same will constantly happen in wars and revolutions. Husband and wife will quarrel. Brother will kill his brother, and the father his son. And even worse things than this will happen. Such is the harsh destiny of man!" Cf. also Lévi-Strauss (1988:171).
28. Cf. Hilger (1951:30-31).
29. See here Ritzenthaler (1970:26-27) on the structure of the birth hut.
30. See here Densmore (1929:76): "A Canadian Chippewa said that when a death occurred they often buried the body inside the wigwam. He said that if a burial were to be outside a tipi they took down the poles and threw them aside. These poles were never used again." See also Ritzenthaler (1970:26-27).
31. Cf. Jones (1917:467).
32. See here Ritzenthaler (1970:108-109) and Densmore (1929:94-95) on the sweat lodge.
33. De Jong (1913:12, n. 4) comments: "Probably the narrator made a mistake here: Nenabozo either does not know anything about it and interrogates his grandmother or is well informed so that he need not ask her. However, there still remains a third possibility: it would not be unlike Nenabozo to tell something himself first and have it afterwards

related to himself by the very person to whom he had been talking; this person may have forgotten that he (Nenabozo) knew before being told (and it is just like N.'s stupidity to believe this) and then his sudden emotion will be more justified."

34. See here Densmore (1929:135): "In loading . . . a canoe the bottom was first loaded heavily. . . ."
35. See here Landes (1937a:9) on the kinship designation 'brother.'
36. This is the whale's heart. See Jenness (1935:18) where the author claims that the "soul" is located in the heart.
37. See here Densmore (1929:149) on the method of making pitch.
38. See here Densmore (1929:38) on Ojibwa attitudes toward hair.
39. See here Landes (1937a:87) on the theme of individualism.
40. See here Densmore (1929:78-83) on the significance of dreams.
41. The allusion here is to the passage of the dead to the land in the west. See Barnouw (1977:136, 228-231). See also Jenness (1956:19-22).
42. See Densmore (1929:152-153) on the uses of basswood fibre.
43. See Densmore (1929:46) on the role of the "sucking doctor" or "djasakid."
44. De Jong (1913:5-16). Nanabozho's peregrinations at the end of the story are typical of the Ojibwa's semi-nomadic lifestyle.

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