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Geological Survey

Museum Bulletin No. 16

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SERIES, No. 6

JUNE 15, 1915

LITERARY ASPECTS OF NORTH AMERICAN
MYTHOLOGY

by

Paul Radin

OTTAWA
GOVERNMENT PRINTING BUREAU
1915

No. 1535

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Literary Aspects of North American Mythology.

BY PAUL RADIN.

INTRODUCTION.

The mythology of primitive people was for so long a time identified with folk-lore and philosophy, that practically all the problems discussed were those that developed from an exclusive occupation with this aspect of the subject. Only within the last two decades have ethnologists seriously applied themselves to the examination of primitive mythology from its literary side. Although it is no longer necessary to demonstrate the *à priori* existence of literary elements in mythology, it appears to me quite essential to demonstrate their precise nature. Certain attempts in this direction have been made by Boas, Lowie, Dixon, and Swanton. Ehrenreich and Boas have likewise inspired a considerable amount of work in connexion with the tabulation of motifs.¹ All these studies have, however, for the most part concerned themselves with a mechanical analysis of myths and the tabulation of the motifs, episodes, and themes of

¹ Boas, in numerous scattered papers; Lowie, "The test-theme in North American mythology," *Journ. Amer. Folk-lore*, Vol. XXI, pp. 97-148; and "Catch-words for mythological motives," *ibid*, pp. 24-27; Dixon, "The mythology of the Central and Eastern Algonkins," *ibid*, Vol. XXII, pp. 1-10; Swanton, "Some practical aspects of the study of myths," *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 1-8; Ehrenreich, "Die Mythen and Legenden der Südamerikanischen Urvölker," 1905; "Götter and Heilbringer," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Vol. 38, pp. 536-610; and "Allgemeine Mythologie," 1910.

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which they consisted.¹ Most of these investigators seem, however, to have been quite oblivious of the implications necessarily entailed by the recognition that in primitive mythology we are often dealing with literature in the true sense of the word.²

For, the moment such an admission is made, we are justified in applying to this primitive literature, the same methods of analysis and criticism that we apply to our own—paying due regard to the personality of the author, or, if you will, the author-raconteur; to his literary peculiarity; to the stylistic peculiarity of the area, etc.

A preliminary step in such studies would have to be what Prof. Boas has long proposed—the detailed characterization of the different mythological areas. For the correct understanding of the role of the author-raconteur, however, something else is needed, something which, unfortunately, is most frequently neglected, namely, a fairly extensive collection of variants of the same tale. Only then will we really be in a position to determine how great has been the play of imagination among different author-raconteurs; whether certain versions have originated in a certain area or not, or whether they have been severally borrowed; and, finally, what is considered by the raconteur-authors to be the difference between "folklore-mythology"³ and literature. Variants also serve one other useful purpose, that of actually demonstrating the existence of literary units.

With the exception of Boas, Lowie, and a few others, most discussions, as noted above, have concerned themselves primarily with problems suggested by regarding myths as the expressions of primitive philosophy. But more important than this assumption, which is apparently a heritage from the students of classical mythology, is the attitude taken toward the myth-complex itself. Almost all mythologists are aware of the different elements that go to form the myth-complex and of the fluctuations between different versions of the same myth; yet in their dis-

¹ Cf. especially Dixon's paper mentioned before and T. T. Waterman, "The explanatory element in the Folk-lore of the North American Indians," *Journ. Amer. Folk-lore*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 1-54.

² This has, however, been frequently recognized by Prof. Boas in his lectures.

³ I use this compound "folklore-mythology" advisedly. The specific meaning I attach to it will be discussed later.

cussions myths are so frequently treated as simple units, that we are immediately led to the conclusion that over and above their analytical separation into constituent elements lie certain theoretical assumptions. What these are in the case of Ehrenreich, Lowie has clearly demonstrated.¹ But Lowie was concerned primarily with an examination of Ehrenreich's mythological theory as such and paid only passing attention to the manner in which the latter may have justified his treatment of the myth. It is, however, precisely by an analysis of Ehrenreich's handling of the myth that a refutation of his position is at all possible. Such an analysis brings out quite clearly that he started with the definite assumption that for every myth one correct and historically primary version existed. It is hardly necessary to go to the trouble of proving this as a main element in Ehrenreich's theory, for it is quite transparent. Our line of argument will, therefore, consist in examining, first, how Ehrenreich arrived at this conclusion, and then, in turn, to inquire whether it is tenable.

EHRENREICH'S MYTHOLOGICAL THEORY AND THE ASSUMPTION OF AN HISTORICALLY PRIMARY VERSION.

It would, I believe, be an injustice to assume that the thesis of an historically primary version was based merely on *à priori* reasoning. A study of the subject matter and *dramatis personæ* in many different areas seemed to point clearly to the fact that myths are frequently concerned with phenomena of nature or more specifically with the celestial bodies—sun, moon, and stars. Again, it was noted that many non-celestial episodes and actors were interpreted in terms of celestial phenomena. It was thus easy enough to generalize and assume that myths originally dealt with natural phenomena, further circumscribed to mean specifically the sun, moon, and stars. Some students of mythology went even further and attempted to prove that the myth primarily dealt only with one of these luminaries. Into these discussions we need not enter. All that we wish to point out is that theoretically there exists a certain amount of justification for the assumption of the naturalistic school of mythologists.

¹ Lowie, *ibid.*, pp. 97-106.

Having demonstrated the nature of the original subject-matter of mythology, it was quite logical to argue that in those cases where divergent versions of the same myth occurred, that version which approached the original subject-matter most closely, was historically the older. Where there existed clear-cut references to celestial actors such an interpretation seemed natural enough. But how are we to deal with those myths where the references are either extremely attenuated or, to the naïve eye, even absent entirely? For these Ehrenreich provided by predicating certain criteria as distinctive of celestial actors and celestial activities. It is in these criteria and the use made of them that Ehrenreich seems at his weakest. Lowie has shown this quite clearly. But, after all is said and done, Lowie's analysis merely makes it clear that Ehrenreich's position was not the only possible one, and that, for instance, it was possible to reverse the interpretation and insist that the activities of celestial heroes were but the transferred activities of human heroes. Ehrenreich realized this clearly and answered quite correctly that here we were dealing with a matter of opinion. Speaking of certain phenomena of the heavens, he says, "Für manche Forscher, zu denen u.a. auch Lowie zu gehören scheint, sind derartige Vorkommnisse freilich die natürlichsten Dinge von der Welt, an dessen irdischer Unterlage nicht zu zweifeln ist. Das ist eben Ansichtssache, die keiner weiteren Diskussion bedarf."¹ Ehrenreich, it seems to me, had a much better answer, for he might easily have pointed to the fact that celestial heroes and celestial events had of necessity to be represented in terms of human heroes and human activities.

In fact, any general critique of a theory like Ehrenreich's hardly touches the core of his position. From his point of view it would represent merely another position. Even a more specific critique, like the demonstration of a literary tendency for a specific area, as in the case of the Pawnee, where practically all myths are interpreted as star myths, would fare no better, for Ehrenreich would conceivably answer that in so far as you chose to call this identification of myths with stars a literary tendency, it was a matter of opinion; for him it was a survival.

¹ "Allgemeine Mythologie," pp. 104, 105.

In the critique of Ehrenreich's position his antagonists have relied on arguments of too general a nature. The interpretation of celestial activities is, after all, largely a matter of opinion, and the unanimity of "star" interpretations among the Pawnee might conceivably operate against its validity as a literary tendency. On the other hand, the all important fact it demonstrates to me, the existence of a definite literary tendency, does not stand out as sharply as it should, just because it is here, first, a characteristic of a general kind, and secondly, a characteristic of a large area. In order to have an easily accepted proof of literary elements in mythology, we must turn to something more specific.

For Ehrenreich, as we have pointed out, there always existed in each area a "correct" version of a myth. We have tried to show in the preceding paragraphs in what way he may have arrived at this assumption. However, we passed over one element that, consciously or unconsciously, may have swayed him in reaching his conclusions, namely, the evolutionary hypothesis of a norm that diverges. Has he not to a certain extent reconstructed certain norms, somewhat in the fashion of general averages, and then predicated their former existence? There is, I believe, a certain justification for such an inference. Let us, however, pass over this phase of his general theory and grant for the present that the versions of the myths themselves, plus certain justifiable theoretical assumptions, one reinforcing the other, led to the formulation of his views. What versions of myths were at his disposal? In the overwhelming majority of cases, only one from each tribe. But that is not all. A selection had set in at the very outset; for, partly due to informant, partly to investigator, the version obtained was the one which the two regarded as the "correct" one. An artificial selection had thus begun in the field itself.

We have now, starting from two entirely different points, found ourselves confronted with the notion of one "correct" version for each myth. Ehrenreich's assumption of a "correct" version can best be attacked after a critical examination of a certain number of myths and their variants has been made, but the field-worker's and Indian's assumption of such a version can be examined directly.

The field worker, is, as a rule, guided by very vague conceptions in predicating correctness for one version as against another. In the main he depends upon his informant. The informant has, it is true, very definite ideas on this subject. But what exactly is the value of these ideas? After analysing the reasons advanced it will be found that in all cases the Indian bases his concept of a correct version on individual circumstances: the specific manner of narrating a certain myth, the individual who narrates it, certain characteristic expressions and intonations, etc. In the last analysis, then, the correct version of the Indian is not a dispassionately formed opinion but merely the expression of a purely local-emotional attitude.

MYTH ANALYSIS.

We will now turn our attention to the specific examination of Ehrenreich's concept of a correct version.

Let us assume for the sake of argument that only one correct version of a myth exists and that the variants represent deviations from this correct version. Are we to consider any constant element appearing in the "original" version and the variants as the essential nucleus of the myth, or are only certain common elements to be regarded as significant? If, for instance, we were to find in a number of places a plot dealing with a warrior who goes on a warpath, is captured, and informs his captors that on a certain day, no matter how well he is guarded, he will escape—the probability of such a plot developing in a number of North American tribes quite independently is considerable. The plot, consequently, must be of a specific nature. If, however, we find in the same tribe two versions of a myth in which the plots are identical but the episodes quite distinct, which are we to regard as the original? Or again, we may find two tales in which the episodes are identical but the plots different; or, finally, two versions in which both plot and episodes are identical, but where the plot is developed in characteristically different ways. In other words, there are conceivably three kinds of identities: that of plot, that of episodes, and that of plot elaboration. What is the reason for this differentiation, and have we a right

to claim for any one of these three identities a special importance in the development of the myth complex? Can any of them be used as criteria for determining which one of a number of versions of a myth is primary? These questions must be answered tentatively, at least.

To me the reasons for the differences in the various versions of the same myth are due mainly to certain literary tendencies at work. To demonstrate this contention I shall discuss at some length the nature of the plot and its elaboration, the episodes, and the motifs, of a number of North American myths.

THE PLOT.

Only a detailed study of every mythological area in America will enable us to decide whether there exist characteristic plots for every definite area. Whether this can be demonstrated or not, there can be no doubt that certain plots are found distributed over enormous areas. Where these plots are of a very general nature and refer to possible happenings within almost any tribe in North America, there is no need of predicating either a common origin or diffusion. Where, however, we find specific types of plot, such as, for instance, Blood-clot and Thrown-away or the Twins; Turtle's war party; Wi'sa'kä¹ and his brother; Tar-baby; etc., they must be regarded as either having sprung from some older myth which was shared in common by all the tribes or as having been diffused from some centre.

We shall give a brief summary of the contents of the myths mentioned:

(A) *Blood-Clot and Thrown-Away, or the Twins.* A woman is killed and twins are taken from her womb. One is hidden but is found upon the return of the father; the other disappears entirely. He reappears afterward as a playmate of his brother and is finally captured by a stratagem. Then, in disobedience to their father's wish, they go out to seek adventures.

(B) *Turtle's War Party.* Turtle decides to go on the war-path and wishes to obtain companions. Various animals ask

¹ The culture hero of the Fox Indians.

permission to go along and show him of what use they can be. He refuses all except some small turtles who approach so noiselessly that he does not notice them. On the raid Turtle is captured and because of his professed fear of water is thrown into a lake and thus escapes.

(C) *Wi'sa'kä^a and His Brother*. *Wi'sa'kä^a* tells his brother never to cross a certain lake, but the brother disobeys and is seized and killed by water-spirits. *Wi'sa'kä^a* finds out what has happened to his brother and is told by an animal who the murderers are. Subsequently he meets a person who is hastening to the aid of the wounded animals. He kills this person, dresses himself in his skin, and, arriving at the home of the water-spirits, kills them under pretense of trying to cure them. He then seizes the skin of his brother, which was being used as a door-flap, and succeeds in making good his escape. Then he endeavours to restore his brother to life but fails.

(D) *Tar-baby*. An animal commits depredations on a chile field owned by an old woman who, after vainly trying to discover a method of capturing him, hits upon the plan of putting a number of decoys in the shape of tar or wax figures. The animal, approaching the following night, sees the decoys, and, in endeavouring to push them aside, is held fast and captured, but succeeds subsequently in making his escape.¹

With the possible exception of (D), the similarity of the plot in the examples given above has led to the assumption of the identity of the myths. Such an assumption is quite justifiable if the myth is regarded as essentially a question of plot. For the study of the specific significance of a myth, identity of plot is, however, only one of a number of features to be considered.

Before proceeding to the discussion of plot elaboration, it may be noted that the above analyses are to a certain extent artificial, for certain episodes and motifs will probably be found to be invariably associated with definite plots.

¹ This is the Mexican version.

PLOT ELABORATION.

The action of a plot is generally developed in one of three ways: either the sequence of events is brought about by the actions of the actors themselves without the intermediation of a figure foretelling the various episodes; or it is outlined beforehand by some individuals and the episodes appear in full force only then; or, finally, the plot is developed in the form of a dialogue.

The first method is found exemplified in many of the trickster cycles of North America, e.g., in the Nenebojo cycle of the Ojibwa, the Icdinige cycle of the Omaha, the Wak'djun'k'a'ga cycle of the Winnebago, and the Rabbit and Coyote cycle of the Zapotecan Indians of Mexico. The second method is found in the legend of the origin of the Thunderbird war-bundle of the Winnebago,¹ the Winnebago myth of "Holy-one and his brother,"² the Omaha "Haxige,"³ etc. The third method is found in many Zapotecan myths. As an illustration of the first method we will select the Ojibwa Nenebojo cycle;⁴ as examples of the second the Omaha Haxige, its Winnebago version "Holy One," and the Winnebago "The man who visited the Thunderbirds;" and as an example of the third, the Zapotecan Creation Myth.⁵

"They (Nenebojo and his grandmother) walked along until they came to the shores of Lake Erie. . . . At Lake St. Clair Nenebojo saw a number of ducks and he thought to himself, 'Just how am I going to kill them?' After a while, he took one of his pails and started to drum and sing at the same time. . . . When the ducks saw Nenebojo standing near the shore, they swam toward him and as soon as he saw this, he sent his grandmother ahead to build a little lodge, where they could live. In the meantime, he killed a few of the ducks, so, while his grandmother started out to build a shelter, Nenebojo went towards the lake

¹ P. Radin, "Winnebago tales," *Jour. Amer. Folk-lore*, Vol. XXII, 1909, pp. 288-313.

² P. Radin, Winnebago MS.

³ J. O. Dorsey, "Dhegiha Texts," *Contributions to North American ethnology*, Vol. VI, p. 289.

⁴ P. Radin, "Some myths and tales of the Ojibwa of southeastern Ontario," *Geological Survey of Canada, Memoir 48, Anthropological Series, No. 2*, 1914, pp. 2, 3.

⁵ P. Radin, Zapotecan Myths (MS.).

where the ducks and geese were floating around and around. Nenebojo jumped into a sack and then dived into the water. The ducks and geese were quite surprised to see that he was such an excellent diver, and came closer and closer. Then Nenebojo challenged them to a contest at diving. He said that he could beat them all. The ducks all accepted the challenge, but Nenebojo beat them. Then he went after the geese and beat them too. For a time he was alternately diving and rising to the surface, all around. Finally he dived under the geese and started to tie their legs together with some basswood bark. When the geese noticed this, they tried to rise and fly away, but they were unable to do so, for Nenebojo was hanging on to the other end of the string. The geese, nevertheless, managed to rise, gradually dragging Nenebojo along with them. They finally emerged from the water and rose higher and higher into the air. Nenebojo, however, hung on, and would not let go, until his hand was cut and the string broke.

"He fell down into the hollow of a big tree. There he lay until he heard somebody chopping wood near by. . . ."

It will not be necessary to continue, for this short extract exemplifies the method clearly.

Let us now turn to the Omaha Haxige, exemplifying the second method.

"In the morning Haxige went hunting. When he was returning, behold a person had gone across the road again. . . . When he had come right upon him, Haxige stood up suddenly. 'Really! the venerable man walks as if something was the matter,' said he, trying to draw him out. 'Yes, very much like it,' said he. 'How can it be that at this late day you have not been hearing it in your travels?' 'Why, venerable man, whatever may be the matter? I have been walking without hearing anything at all,' said Haxige. 'Yes, Haxige's younger brother having been killed, Haxige wounded two of the water-monster's most dearly beloved children. I have been going thither to powwow over them,' said he. 'Really! venerable man, it may be very desirable to witness the treatment,' said Haxige. 'Yes, it is so,' said the buzzard. 'I make it a rule to have no witnesses

at all.' 'Really! venerable man, it may be very desirable I may witness you. I too walk hunting,' said Haxige. 'Yes, it is so. You can see me perform,' said the buzzard. 'Yet, venerable man, I will hear from you how you do every one of the deeds,' said Haxige tempting him. 'You shall gaze on me,' said the buzzard. Singing his song, he danced saying,

Heke tako, heke heke tako.

'Well, venerable man, if it be always just so it looks very nice to me. Venerable man, how do you usually perform it? I wish to hear the whole of it from you,' said Haxige. 'I said that when I reached there this time I will perform the cure. There are four peaks which are flat on top. When I reach the fourth, they usually come thither for me. . . . They put me in a robe and they carry me on it. When I get there this time, I will say, "Let the water stand hot. When I heat two irons red-hot and press them repeatedly against the wounds, they will live.'"'¹

The following is the Winnebago account.

"Holy One heard some one singing and when he got nearer he saw that the singer was chopping wood. Holy One went to an old burnt stump and blackened his face. Then he approached the singer and noticed that it was an old woman. She was singing:

'Chiefs, O ye chiefs!'

Holy One approached and said, 'Grandmother, why are you saying that?' 'Oh,' said the old woman, 'grandson, are you Holy One?'

'No, grandmother, I am not Holy One. I suppose he has cried himself to death by this time.' Then said the old woman, 'Grandson, the two sons of the chief have been shot with arrows and I am chopping wood for them.' 'Grandmother,' said Holy One, 'what are they going to do about it?' 'Grandson, are you Holy One?' 'Don't be foolish, grandmother. I have been

¹ J. O. Dorsey, *ibid.*, p. 240.

fasting over yonder hill for some time, and as I heard you chopping wood, I came here. I have not been to the village for some time. That is why I am asking you these questions. As for Holy One, he must be dead long ere this.' 'Grandson, you are right,' she said. 'In the morning the water-spirits will go after the hawk to cure their wounded relatives.'

" 'If he comes in time, what will be the result?' said Holy One. 'If he comes in time, they will live.' 'Grandmother, at what time will the hawk come?' 'Oh grandson, are you Holy One?' 'How can I be Holy One? He must be dead long ere this.'

" 'Well, grandson, the hawk will be here at noon.' 'Grandmother, from what direction will he come?' 'He will come from the east.' 'What will they do to Holy One?' he asked. 'Grandson, they are going to kill him.' 'Grandmother, how will they kill him?' he asked. 'They will kill him by sending snakes after him.' 'Grandmother, if they do that he will put on his turtle-shell shoes and trample the snakes to death.'

" 'Surely, grandson, you are the Holy One who is talking?' 'No, grandmother, I am not the Holy One. What will they do after he has killed the snakes?' 'Grandson, they will make it snow and have his lodge entirely covered with snow, and when he has eaten up all his food and has begun to eat his bow-string, then a four-cornered drove of buffalo will trample him to death.' 'Grandmother, if they do that, he will kill many buffaloes and obtain very much meat for eating.' 'Now, grandson, are you not the Holy One?' 'O, grandmother, how can I be the Holy One? If they fail in that, what will they do next?' 'Well, grandson, if they fail in that, they will cause a flood to come and they will flood the world.' 'Well, grandmother, what will they do if he gets into his metal boat?' 'Well, grandson, the water-spirits will then tip the boat over with their tails.' 'Now, grandmother, if they do that, he will take his metal oars and amuse himself cutting off the tails of water-spirits.' 'Grandson, are you really not the Holy One?' 'Grandmother, how can you talk in that way? How can I be Holy One? What will they do then?' he asked. 'My dear grandson, the spirit muskrats will chew a hole through the bottom of his boat.' 'Well, grandmother, if they do that, he will take his metal oars and cut the spirit musk-

rats in two.' 'Grandson, are you not the Holy One?' she said. 'How can I be the Holy One, grandmother?' he answered. 'Grandmother, is that all they will do?' 'Yes, except that I will be one of those to chew through the boat.' 'Grandmother, you are quite old to do that. How are your teeth? Won't you show them to me?' 'Well, grandson, my teeth are thus,' she said and, closing her eyes and opening her mouth very wide, she showed him her teeth. He then took his bow and struck her in the mouth, knocking out her teeth and killing her. Then she fell to the ground an old female muskrat."

As a last example of the second method we will quote from "The Man who visited the Thunderbirds."

"He took the trail of his brothers and followed it till he came to two camps, a small and a large one. He entered the first one and found a very old woman sitting there. As soon as she saw him, she addressed him thus: 'My poor grandchild, sit down here, I am very sorry for you.' And then she went on to tell him what had happened to his sister and brothers. She told him that the person who had been talking to his sister the last time was a bad spirit; but that the sister had mistaken him for the father of her child and had accompanied him to his camp. However, he was not the father of her child, as she afterward found out. All his brothers had been killed by this bad spirit and she did not believe that he, the youngest, would escape their fate. The old woman then proceeded to tell him that his sister was by this time so completely under the influence of this bad spirit that she was as bad as he and preferred to help her husband rather than her brother.

"'Now, listen, my grandchild. The first thing that the bad spirit will ask you to do to-night will be to prepare a sweatbath for him, and in order to do that he will tell you to fetch a certain stone. That stone belongs to him and was put there for a certain purpose. Just as you touch it, it will begin to roll down hill and you will roll with it. That is how some of your brothers met their death. Now, you just take a pole, walk up the opposite side of the hill, touch the stone with the pole, and it will then roll down the hill. As soon as it has stopped rolling, you can pick it

up and take it home. When you have brought this home, your brother-in-law will tell you to get the bark of a certain very large tree. That tree belongs to him and it is there for a certain purpose. Just as you touch the tree, it will fall upon you and kill you. Some of your brothers met their death in that way. Now you take a stick and go as near to the tree as you can and throw the stick at it. It will hit the bark, which will fall off. Then you take as much of it as you want and bring it to him. When you have brought this, he will send you out again and tell you to fetch the pole for the sweathouse. When you get to the place where he has sent you, you will find four large rattlesnakes lying curled up. These are what he meant you to get. Some of your brothers met death there. They were killed by the snakes. So now, my grandson, take some tobacco with you and give it to them and tell them not to hurt you. I shall put in my influence to help you with them. These snakes do not belong to him; but he is more powerful than they and he keeps them there as his slaves. He just gives them enough to eat and to drink. However, they have never had anything to smoke, and they will be glad to accept your gift and not molest you. When you come to your brother-in-law's place, put their heads in the ground and twist their tails, and so you will have the finest kind of lodge structure. After this has been done, he will tell you to pick up the stone with your naked hand and burn you up. That is how some of your brothers met their fate. Now, my grandson, when it comes to that point, try to find some excuse to leave him and come over to see me before you pick up the stone.' "

In the cases cited, the figures of the buzzard and old woman seem to exist for the sole purpose of foretelling what is to happen. They seem to have no connexion whatsoever either with the hero of the plot or his enemy. Their rôle is quite similar to that of the good or bad fairy of European folklore, who turns up at the opportune moment. How are we to explain their rôle? If we wish to remain on firm ground and eschew general assumptions that can be neither proven nor disproven, the best procedure would be to explain it by the function it fulfils. From this point of view they are indisputable literary devices, at least now. The plot demands them.

It is not only in so general a manner as is indicated by the above selections that the second method of plot elaboration is used. Even in myths where the first method is used for the general elaboration of the plot, the second is frequently found employed for specific episodes and motifs. For instance in the Winnebago Twin myth, when the boys have to disguise themselves in order not to be detected by the giant who is carrying the head of their slain uncle, instead of going to the scene of action and disguising themselves there, an old man tells them what to do, or, according to another version, one of the boys disguises himself and the other judges of the adequacy of the success.

For the third method of plot elaboration, I will select the Zapotec legend of "The Rooster and the Bull."

"A rooster, walking along in a happy frame of mind, chanced upon a place so dreary-looking that it did not seem possible that any other animal lived there. Our valiant rooster trudged along singing with that sonorous voice that we know he possesses. Coming after a while to a very beautiful place, he said, 'How beautiful is this earth! Why have I not a companion with whom I might converse? Indeed, I would like to know how it was that the world was created.' After he had spoken a good deal, a bull who was sleeping there jumped up and said, 'O my friend, little rooster, it is but a moment since you asked why you had no companion. Now listen. I have hastened to meet you because your words made me feel a deep pity for you.' The rooster immediately said, 'How fine this is! Where were you when you heard my voice?' Ah, my friend, I was resting under a tree which you may notice near here, but as soon as I heard your sighs I hastened to meet you that I might talk with you. But before I begin, tell me what you would like to have me speak of.' 'My friend, I would like to have you tell me something of how the world was created,' answered the rooster. The bull answered, 'Very well, my friend, I will commence.'

" 'When I was a young child, I remember very well how my father would speak of this at night, that is, of the creation of the world. Our ancestors created the world. And how did

they create it? Our ancestor, on a certain day, took a piece of clay to form something like a stone. That was the first day . . . “‘But,’ said the rooster, ‘there are many things to be seen in this world that our ancestors must have formed, for instance the water, that the plants might grow. . . .’”

This third method is found only in Mexico, as far as I know, and it may represent a peculiar historical development. I do not believe, however, that it is connected with European influence.

Whether any of these types of plot elaboration are distinctive of certain areas, only future research can definitely determine. It is, however, quite likely, to judge from the complete absence of the second type of plot elaboration in all trickster myths, that certain myths are traditionally elaborated according to one type and others according to another. The type of plot elaboration may also be utilized in determining more precisely the source for certain versions of a myth. For instance, where, as in the case of the Omaha Haxige and the Winnebago Holy One, not only details but likewise plot elaboration are identical, there is a strong presumption that the versions belong together. Finally, though it be significant neither of an area nor a tribe, plot elaboration may at times be a characteristic of individual raconteurs and thus acquire considerable importance in the study of myth variants.

The three types of plot elaboration are, however, of importance not merely because they represent different ways of unfolding a plot, but because they indirectly regulate the relation of the component elements of the plot to one another. In the first type, where the plot is unfolded by the actions of the dramatic personæ, the interest centres naturally on the separate actions as such, whereas in the second and third type, the interest lies in the descriptions of the actions. The various episodes and motifs are in the latter type described in groups and when subsequently the actions are performed they have a tendency to be slurred over. At the same time the various incidents are described with a precision and detail in type I not to be found in type II, because the interest culminates at the end of each incident. This is not true for type II, where the literary purpose seems to be to incite interest up to a certain

point and then arrest it. As a result, the various episodes are practically told in two unequal narrations, neither of which is complete in itself, for all interest in future elaboration of the plot would cease if the first description were complete in itself and, on the other hand, the second description of the episode—in which the action is performed—being the dénouement, cannot be stressed in the same manner as the first. A few examples will bring this out clearly.

Let us compare, for instance, the episodes described by the old woman on pages 13 and 14 with the following elaboration.

“Shortly after the old woman had finished speaking, the sister entered and, seeing her brother, addressed him, ‘Brother, I have brought you something to eat.’ Then she handed him a wooden bowl containing a large amount of liver as dry as bone. He took the bowl and as soon as he noticed its contents, threw it straight into the face of his sister, saying, ‘I am not accustomed to food of this kind. My brothers, who brought me up, never gave me any food like this.’ His sister then left the lodge and, it being supper-time, the old woman cooked him a supper of vegetables. After he had finished his supper his sister came in again. ‘Tenth-son, your brother-in-law wants you to prepare his sweatbath. He is accustomed to using a certain stone which you will find on yonder hill and which he wishes you to get for him.’ Then she left the lodge. Her brother went to the hill and, following his grandmother’s advice, ascended it on the side opposite the stone, touched it with his stick, and it rolled rapidly down the hill. He then carried it to his brother-in-law’s lodge, but left it outside. Then he went to inform the latter that he had brought the stone. His brother-in-law merely nodded and told him to bring the bark for the lodge structure. This he set out to do, and when he came near the tree he carefully took a place of safety and touched the bark with his stick. It fell with a terrific crash. Then he took as much of it as he wanted and carried it to his brother-in-law. The latter merely nodded and sent him to get the lodge-poles. When he came to the place where the snakes were confined he took some tobacco and threw it to them. They accepted it and allowed him to seize them and carry them to his brother-in-law. Having

arrived there, he stuck their heads into the ground and twisted their tails, thus forming the poles of the sweatlodge. Then he put the bark over these poles and the structure was complete.

"As soon as everything was in readiness, his brother-in-law told him to place the stone in the lodge. Instead of doing this, however, he got up some excuse and went to see his grandmother. She prepared something for him, rubbed his arms with it thoroughly, and told him to return to the sweatbath immediately and do as his brother-in-law had asked. This he did and, much to the disgust of the latter, the stone did not burn in the least. Indeed he got so provoked that he said to him ironically, 'You think you are a clever fellow, don't you? I don't want to take a bath at all'"

Let us also compare the episodes described on pages 11-13 with the following elaboration.

"They (the water-spirits) caused the water to rush out with them, but when it rushed up to Holy One, he would shoot it back with his bow and arrows and go on. Finally the spirits said, 'Let us quit, as we are losing men.' Thus they said after he had killed a great many of them.

"One day the snakes began to come, but Holy One put on his shoes which he had kept handy, and began to step on their heads. Finally the snakes said, 'Come, let us stop, for many of us are getting killed.'

"Again some time after this it began to snow, but as Holy One had known of this, he was prepared and had plenty of wood and food set aside. He was now entirely covered with snow, as the snow had fallen to a great depth, and he could only see through a little hole in the top of the lodge. This was his situation. Finally one day the spirits said, 'It is about time that someone should go and see how he is getting along. So let us send our brother-in-law there! So the son-in-law who was a little bird went there. He came a second and a third time to see how Holy One was getting along. When he came the fourth time, he peeped in through the hole and he heard Holy One say, 'O my, if I could only have a little bird to eat I might be able to live four days longer. Why should I say that? I have my bowstring still. I will eat that as a last resort.' So saying,

he took the bow and laid it upon some coals of fire. Then the little bird went home and reported that Holy One was eating his bowstring and that he had said that he wanted to eat the bird. 'Aha! It is about time,' they said. Then, getting a large drove of buffaloes together, they tried to trample him to death. But he had gone out and was waiting for them, so when they came and trampled all over the place where he was supposed to be staying, he stood to one side and shot them, killing a great many. After a while the buffaloes said, 'Come, let us get away, for we are being killed very fast.' Then they stopped and went away. Then Holy One discovered that the snow was only on his lodge, and that in other places the ground was dry. Then he began dressing the buffaloes and drying them and packing them away.

"One day it began to rain and it did not stop until the earth was flooded. Then Holy One got into a metal boat that he had prepared and went floating around. Suddenly he heard something rap against his boat. He took his metal oar and struck the edge of his boat and cut the water-spirit in two. Soon another one rapped against his boat and still another one, and Holy One amused himself all this time cutting off water-spirits' tails. After a while he heard something chewing at the bottom of the boat, and he took his metal oar and swung it around the bottom and up came a spirit muskrat cut in two. Again and again this happened, but he kept on cutting them with his oars, until finally the spirits said, 'Come, let us quit, for we are being killed fast.' "

In both these examples the repetition of the episode is stressed far more weakly and in both cases additions have been made in the repetition in order that it may be strong enough for the rôle it has been called upon to play in the plot. In the first example these additions are apparently intended to set off the characters of the sister and the brother-in-law, while in the second example they are intended to set off one particular episode—that of the snow storm and the attempt to starve Holy One—probably to prevent a monotonous repetition of the episodes narrated before. In using the word "additions," we lay ourselves open to the legitimate criticism that the first narration of the episode

may at times represent a slurring and the repetition be the complete description. This may happen, and we have an example of it in the above snow storm episode. The complete description of the episode would, however, have been quite impossible in the first part of the plot and we have here an admirable illustration of how a certain type of plot elaboration does necessitate an alteration in the form of an episode. Why however, is the episode given completely when repeated? In addition to the literary reason given above, two other reasons are possible. It may be a true episode and not merely a motif, as the pursuit with water which is shot back and the snakes unquestionably are, or the author-raconteur did not feel that he could take the liberty of slurring it and, since it could not possibly be grouped with the other motifs and episodes in the first part of the plot, it had to be given afterwards. But why was the flood episode slurred both in the first description and in the repetition? It cannot, therefore, be hesitancy on the part of the author-raconteur which has preserved the complete account of the snow storm, but really his realization of its necessity from a literary view-point. A complete narration of the flood incident would have been ridiculous and, consequently, it is not given. The same point comes out admirably in the following episode of the Holy One.

(It will be remembered that the old woman has told Holy One that the hawk is to cure the wounded water-spirits).

"Then he (Holy One) went home. The next morning, at noon, he went to the place that the old woman had mentioned as the place where the hawk would come. Just at noon the hawk came in sight. The hawk was singing:

'Hawk, they went after you as a doctor.

Hawk, what will you do?

Hawk, you may carry your gourd,

Hawk, you may carry your gourd,

Hawk, you may carry your gourd.

Aho!'

"Thus the hawk sang as he went along carrying on his back a black sack with a gourd on top of it. As he turned from side

to side the gourd would rattle, keeping time with his song. When the hawk came to the place where Holy One was waiting, the latter said, 'Grandfather, how pretty you look!' The hawk stopped and then Holy One said again, 'Grandfather, why are you travelling around?' He answered, 'Grandson, the sons of the chief have been shot with arrows and it is to their place that I am going.' 'Grandfather, what will you do when you get there?' 'Well, grandson, I will go on singing as I have been doing and when I get there they will open the door for me and I will go in.' 'You look very pretty, grandfather. Would you mind going back a little bit and coming again? But turn from side to side a little more and come down lower.' 'All right,' said the hawk, and he went back a little way and started again, singing as he went. 'Grandfather, make a few more turns and come down a little bit lower,' said Holy One. The hawk did as he was told and came down a little lower. As he went by, Holy One caught him and killed him. Then he skinned him and put the skin on himself and acted exactly as the hawk had done."

There are two literary reasons why this hawk episode is repeated and given in detail. First, because Holy One has to reach the home of the water-spirits in disguise; secondly, because the episode of the killing of the water-spirits, owing to its importance, has to be carefully motivated.

It is quite interesting to note the different way in which the incidents have been grouped in the various tales cited as illustrative of the second type of plot elaboration. In the tale of Holy One, the whole plot is foretold in part by the woodpecker and in part by the old woman. In the case of the tale of Haxige, it is only in one of J. O. Dorsey's versions that a large portion of the plot is foretold, while in the tale of "The man who visited the Thunderbirds" only that part of the plot which refers to the various tests of the hero is foretold. In the last tale the old woman foretells the various tests in three instalments instead of one. In a Mixe and Huave myth obtained in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, in two versions, the incidents are in one version foretold in a single instalment and in the other in three. How are we best to account for this variability? It is certainly not due to mere chance. It can, we believe, be best explained, in the main, by literary considerations.

It is quite clear that the raconteur who told the version of Holy One quoted above was desirous of not only carefully motivating the main elements of the plot, but also of clearly centring interest upon them, and he accomplished the latter by attracting and at the same time arresting the attention of the listener. Take, for example, the following starting point of the myth.

"Once there lived a person together with his younger brother. One day the older brother said, 'Brother, you need not fear anything, for I am the holiest person in existence and am very powerful.'

"One day, all the spirits in the heavens and all the spirits on earth held a council about this man, because he had said he was the only holy person. There was a lake near his place and a water-spirit village not far off. The water-spirits were the people chosen to do the deed (i.e., kill the younger brother). Holy One did not know of this at all.

"One day his younger brother did not return and Holy One waited for him in vain. Then he went in search of him. During his search he wept and wherever he stopped and wept, there a large lake would be formed from his tears. Whenever he sobbed, the hills would tumble down and valleys would form in their place."

Here we have the initial incident, the death of Holy One's brother, stated in the briefest and barest manner. Our raconteur was apparently not interested in particularly motivating this episode. He was, however, concerned with the search for the murderers, as can be seen by the following detail.

"In his search he came across the wolf. Said he to the wolf, 'Little brother, do you happen to know anything about my brother who is lost? I feel that he is dead somewhere.' Then the wolf said, 'Brother, I go all over the earth, but I have no knowledge of him.' 'All right, all right,' said the Holy One, and started to walk away. Just then the wolf said, 'Holy One, I am not the one to look after your brother.' 'Oh,' said Holy One, 'is that it?' and raced after him. The wolf ran with all his might but Holy One overtook him, and, taking his bow, broke open his jaws and killed him, saying, 'I suppose you too took part in the

conspiracy against me.' Then he hung him on a tree and went on.

"As he was going along he came across the fox and he addressed him, saying, 'Little brother, I feel that something has befallen my brother. Now you are a cunning fellow; perhaps you know something of his whereabouts.' Then the fox replied, 'Brother, I go all over the earth, but I have not heard anything about him.' Then Holy One started to walk away, but just then the fox said, 'Holy One, I am not supposed to take care of your brother.' Then he ran away. 'Ho', said Holy One, 'is that it? I suppose you too are one of those who conspired against me.' Then he ran after the fox, overtook him, broke open his jaws, and killed him, hanging his body on a tree.

"Thus he went along encountering different animals. The next one he met was the raven and he addressed him, saying, 'Little brother, you are a cunning fellow; perhaps you know what has befallen my brother?' 'Brother,' said the raven, 'I roam all over the world and the heavens, but I have not seen your brother.' Then, as Holy One started to go away, the raven said, 'Holy One, I am not supposed to take care of your brother.' Thereupon Holy One said, 'What! you little rascal. I suppose that even such little fellows as you were present at the conspiracy.' Then he knocked him down just as he started to fly away. He pulled his jaws open and hung him on a tree.

"It was now getting toward evening and Holy One was going home. On the way home a little bird crossed his path, almost hitting him in the face. Again and again this happened. The fourth time the bird did it Holy One said, 'Ho!' and looked up to see who it was. It was the woodpecker. Then Holy One said, 'I wanted to cry here in peace, but what little bird is it that peeks into my face?' Then the woodpecker said, 'Oh, I have news for you, my grandson.' 'My, my, said Holy One, 'I did not know it was you, grandmother, or I would not have said that. Please do tell me all you know and I will give you my paint so that you can paint your face, and my awl so that you can use it for your bill.' 'All right, grandson, your brother is used as a door-flap by the chief of the water-spirits, who lives yonder in the lake near your place. Every one of the spirits was called

to the council in order to conspire against you, but my husband and myself were not invited, and that is why I am telling you this. Furthermore, at the sand-bar south of the lake is a place where some of the water-spirits go to bask in the sun on nice days.' 'Grandmother, it is good,' said Holy One, and he took the paint which was red and painted the woodpecker's face and then took his awl and placed it in her bill. Thereupon she flew away to a hardwood tree and pecked into it, sending her bill clear through. She felt very proud of her new bill."

The disguise of Holy One and the wounding of the water-spirits follows, then the meeting with the old woman then the various incidents of which she has spoken, and finally Holy One's attempt to restore his brother to life. The motivation of the search and the incidents connected with the water-spirits' pursuit of Holy One occupies fully one-half of the entire tale. The incident of the death of the brother and the attempt to restore him to life have become dwarfed. The type of plot elaboration demanded first a heaping up of incidents to be foretold and then their actual occurrence, and this naturally crowded out other things. In both versions of the Haxige tale¹ (12) the episode of the buzzard hurrying to cure the wounded water-spirits is strongly stressed and he tells Haxige all that the latter desires to know about the whereabouts of the wounded animals and how to approach them, but the pursuit of Haxige, after he has killed the water-spirits, is dismissed in the following manner.

"They went homeward to attack him. When they had come very close to their home, Haxige went rushing homeward, carrying his brother on his arm. . . . But though they became all kinds of animals, they did not overtake Haxige and his brother. 'There is cause for anger! Make ye an effort. You will be apt to fail,' said they. They went along after him. It happened that Haxige, when on his way home, drew near a spring which boiled up repeatedly. It was a very dense forest at the foot of a cliff, a very high hill, whose perpendicular surface was concave. 'Do ye make an effort. You have almost overtaken him,' said they. At length Haxige became a bullet.

¹ J. O. Dorsey, *ibid.*, pp. 226-253.

He had gone headlong into the water, 'tcu.' In a moment he made himself become a stone beneath the water. And they went homeward, having failed in attacking him. . . ."

(In the second version Haxige is not pursued at all).

The rôle of the old woman, which is so important in Holy One, has become changed in the following manner in Haxige:

"Haxige departed. At length there was an aged beaver-woman making a boat. 'Hu,' said she, 'there is a very strong Haxige odor.' 'Old woman, there is no cause for complaint, as his brother was killed by the water-spirits, that Haxige is wandering around at random and is killing himself by crying,' said he. 'Old woman, are you not indeed making a boat?' said Haxige. 'Yes. Have you not been hearing it up to this time?' said the old woman. 'As his younger brother was killed, Haxige killed two of the chief water-monsters; and as they have failed to kill him, they have threatened to make the whole earth full of water. And I am making a dug-out for myself,' said she. He said as follows: 'Old woman, Haxige ever wishes to have an abundance of sense. He has made a dug-out and if he pile up wood at the bow, filling the bottom with earth, he will sit by a fire blazing very brightly; and, seizing the animals that come floating along, he will continue eating them.' 'Even if they fail so, they speak of making an abundance of snakes on the earth,' said the old woman. 'He will put shells of red-breasted turtles on his feet and will cover his hands in like manner. So when the snakes come to bite, having made a thick skin for himself, he will continue to crush in their heads by treading on them.' . . . 'Even if they fail so, they threaten to make darkness over the whole earth. They say that if he get himself in a gorge unawares, he will die from the fall,' said the old woman. . . . 'Old woman, when he sits in a gorge and fills it with wood, he will sit by a very good fire. What animal reaches him by leaping, will lie dead from the fall, and he will take it and sit eating it.' 'Even if they fail so, they threaten to make a deep snow over the whole earth. They say that he will die from the snow that will press down on him,' said she. 'Having made a very large grass-lodge, he will make a very high pile of wood for himself, and then he will make snow-shoes. What animals get buried unawares in the deep snow,

having killed them at his pleasure, he will stand eating them,' said Haxige. 'What sort of person are you that you despise Haxige?' he said, and, crushing her head many times with an axe, he killed her."

(In the second version the old woman is given far less space.)

Both versions of the tale practically end with the old woman's narration. None of the things she speaks of take place. Why, then, does the old woman appear and speak of these things? The best answer seems to be that they originally formed incidents of the tale, as it was told among the Omaha, and that their simple enumeration is a secondary feature that developed in consequence of the prominence of the type of plot development used. However, the prominence of this type of plot development is not due to any general preference on the part of the raconteur but apparently to his artistic belief that in such a way certain episodes in his plot could best be motivated.

Summing up, we can say that a certain amount of the variability found in versions of the same myth or tale is due to the influence of different types of plot elaboration, which in turn is due to the artistic individuality of the raconteur.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The nature of the actors in myths has, we know, played a considerable part in discussions. The German school sought to interpret them all as impersonations of the forces of nature. We will not go into an analysis of their point of view, but instead approach the problem in another way. To what extent, let us inquire, is the specific character of the actor essential to the plot? Would it make any difference, for instance, if we substituted one character for another? In other words, what we will try to examine is whether the nature of the actor and his acts flow from the myth-content or not. Let us look at a few examples.

No one would, for instance, hesitate to identify the Haxige myth given above with the Holy One, merely because the Omaha have the duck and the buzzard where the Winnebago have the old woman (muskrat) and the hawk. It seems, rather, reasonable to suppose that the exact animal nature of these intermediaries is

of little importance, as far as the story itself is concerned, although it may be of importance in studying the diffusion of versions. The fact that in these two myths the animals that act as intermediaries, although different, belong to the same type, being water animals in the one case and birds of prey in the other, indicates, in all probability, that the Omaha and Winnebago versions are rather closely related.

If, again, in identical plots the heroes are regarded as human beings until the very end of the myth, where we discover that they are really either animals or celestial objects, it does not disturb us if the explanation is clearly an after-thought. If, however, in the plot itself there are indications of the animal or celestial nature of the hero, are we to regard his human nature as secondary or not? It is quite likely that if a tendency to identify heroes with stars, for instance, exists that it would influence the type of actions he performs. On the other hand, the nature of an originally celestial hero might become so attenuated that but for the survival of certain "celestial" episodes, it merges completely into a human being. Perhaps the voracious hero who turns out to be the child of the sun and moon represents such a merging of celestial into human hero. It is naturally rather difficult to be certain of the latter process, whereas for the former, the extension of a specific interpretation over all the features of a hero's activities, examples can be easily found, as the following will show.

The Winnebago have a rather popular myth called "Brother and Sister," with the following plot: A man living with his sister is one day challenged to a fight by a stranger and defeated. His head is then cut off and taken away. His body goes on living, however, and is taken care of by his sister. His sister gives birth to two boys who succeed in killing the conqueror of their uncle and restore the head to the latter's body. Two versions of this myth were obtained. Version A is summarized above; version B was identical with that of A, but the uncle is supposed to be the evening star, the mother the moon, the father the sun, and the children show their parentage in the disguises they assume, such as that of vibrating light and heat. At the same time, the boys have become identified with the twins

who play so great a part in Winnebago mythology, and the entire myth appears in an epic about their adventures. Indeed it may very well be that originally it was connected with them.

In the above we have, then, a clear illustration of how the heroes of a certain myth have been consistently interpreted in a certain way and how figures like the twins, who could by no manner of means ever be regarded as celestial beings, have been remoulded so as to fit into the general scheme. Now, such a process, it would be fair to assume, must have occurred often, and a careful study and analysis of a body of myths that show a marked preference for "celestial" interpretations, like the Pawnee, would probably bring to light a large number of instances.

In addition to the above causes for variation, one other may be pointed out. In every cultural area or tribe, certain animals or beings have become traditionally associated with certain definite characteristics; one is the fool, another the sloven, a third the humorist, a fourth the boaster, a fifth the fop, a sixth the gossip, etc. Whenever these respective characters are needed, they are supplied from the stock-in-trade of the particular tribe. If a certain myth is borrowed, certain figures are, therefore, likely to be displaced even if the myth content is in no way altered.

It must be quite clear, then, from the above discussion, that neither the animal, human, or celestial nature of the hero, nor the type or kind of his activities can throw much light on the history of a given myth; that the essential thing to grasp is that to-day the myth is a literary unit that requires a hero whose specific nature and activities will be determined by a large number of factors; that these factors are, in the main, the characteristics of a hero as told by different families in a tribe, the influence of some raconteur, and, lastly, the traditional association of certain figures with definite traits, episodes, and motifs.

THE EPISODES.

We have, up to the present, been treating of the general plot of the myth analytically, separated from those other ele-

ments that go to form the entire myth-complex. We shall now treat the episodes in the same manner.

Would we equate two myths merely on the basis of similarity in certain episodes? Given a general culture-area such as that of the Woodlands or Woodland-Plains, would similarity in certain of the episodes be sufficient to identify two myths? The answer to this question is of fundamental importance.

When, indeed, are two episodes identical? When the general plot is the same or when the plot plus its motivation is the same? Generally speaking, we seem to regard the similarity of the plot as sufficient. Take, for example, the well-known episode of the trickster and the ducks he wishes to capture. Here the episode consists of the tying of the ducks' legs. That is the essential object. How it is accomplished varies according to the version obtained. In spite of the variability of the motivation, we feel confident, nevertheless, that we are always dealing with the same episode. Or, take the episode of the hero in "Haxige" and "Holy One" and the animal who informs him what has become of his brother. Here the essential thing is that the hero obtain the required information. How he actually obtains it varies widely. The divergence in motivation may bring in a large amount of detail of a different kind for each version, so that externally the episodes may appear quite different. If, for instance, the information is obtained from the woodpecker, the author-raconteur may bring in the whole story of how the woodpecker obtained his present characteristics, whereas if he obtained it from some animal who had been slighted by those who had killed the hero's brother, the whole story of how he had been insulted might be brought in.

Finally, let us take the Mexican-Indian tale of the rabbit committing depredations on the chile-field of an old woman. The essential feature of the plot is how to catch the rabbit and drive him away. This, according to many versions of the tale, is accomplished by distributing tar-baby decoys over the field. From a New Mexican informant, however, I obtained a version in which the rabbit was driven away by the owner of the chile-field paying insects to crawl into the rabbit's anus. The tar-baby as a decoy, on the other hand, I found in a Mexican-Zapotecan version of Grimm's story of the Golden Apple tree.

No further illustrations are needed. They can be found in any collection of North American myths. What we discover in every case is that the motivation of the episode is extremely variable and that the constant element is always the plot.

THE MOTIFS.

The motifs form the last unit into which the myth-complex can be analytically separated. Every cultural area seems to have a large although by no means unlimited assortment. The extreme variability with which one, then another, is used in different versions of the same myth seems difficult to explain unless we assume that they are more or less free elements whose use depends in some respects on traditional association with certain episodes or actors, but mainly on the selective powers exercised by the author-raconteur and on the psychological-literary necessities of the plot.

Summing up the results of our inquiry into the nature of the myth-complex, we may say that there are, broadly speaking, five units; the type of plot elaboration, the dramatis personæ, the episodes, the motivation of the episodes, and the motifs; that one or more of these may vary in different versions of the same myth; and that, finally, the main problem we have to solve is to explain this variability. We have sought to indicate that the explanation lay in the manifold literary tendencies at work, particularly in the literary individuality of the author-raconteur. The proof of our contention we will furnish in detail in another part of this essay.

THE MYTH-COMPLEX AS A UNIT.

We have discussed in the above sections the separate units of the myth-complex. Our separation was, however, admittedly arbitrary except from a purely analytical point of view. Let us now, therefore, look at the myth-complex as a unit.

If we examine a number of myths, such as the Trickster cycle of the Winnebago, the Wi-sa'kä^a cycle of the Fox, the Nenebojo cycle of the Ojibwa, and the Coyote cycle of the Mexi-

can Indians, and compare them with the Twin cycle of the Winnebago, the Wi·sa·kä^a myth of the origin of the Fox Midewiwin, the cycle of Haxige of the Omaha, and with numerous origin myths of ceremonials, a great difference will be found to exist in the way in which the different elements of the myth-complex have been welded together.

In the Trickster cycle of the Winnebago and of the Ojibwa of southeastern Ontario and in the Fox Wi·sa·kä^a cycle there is practically no general plot, but merely a sequence of episodes strung together either without a connecting link or by means of a very vague general theme. Frequently this theme consists simply in regarding the episodes as various stages in a journey. Such, for instance, is the case in the Winnebago cycle and in the Nenebojo cycle of southeastern Ontario. In the Mississauga version the theme is the bungling host. The latter is also found in the Wi·sa·kä^a cycle. Whatever unity is found in this last-mentioned cycle consists in the characteristics of the host. Each episode is in itself a unit with this proviso—that some are probably grouped together, in the minds of the people, with other themes, different heroes, and different psychological-literary situations.

In order to test the constancy of the association of a definite series of episodes in a given story, I had two brothers, among the Winnebago, tell me a myth which they had both derived from the same source, and subsequently I had an individual tell me the same myth at different intervals. The result showed a marked variability in the selections of the episodes.

Such is the situation we find in the general trickster cycles. The moment, however, we turn to myths like that of the Winnebago "Twins" and the others mentioned above which have become associated with rituals, an entirely different condition confronts us. There is, first, a more or less marked unity of plot. Episodes are held together by reference to some literary unit, actions are fairly well motivated, and there is a gradual unfolding of a plot. It is quite apparent immediately that we are dealing with a literary unit. Take for example the Twin cycle. It consists of more than half a dozen myths, but they have, on the whole, been so artistically woven together by general themes,

unity in the characterization of the heroes and their activities, and by skilful motivation, that one hardly realizes the mosaic nature of the whole. We are here clearly in the presence of an epic. I secured practically all the separate myths found in the epic separately, and a comparison of these separate versions with the versions in the epic showed most illuminatingly the manner in which the author of the epic had subordinated the separate elements of his tale to the unity of the plot.

The same evidence of literary remodelling is to be seen in the majority of origin myths of rituals. Here even the loose Trickster cycle has become unified and coherent. Compare in this respect the figure of the hare in the Winnebago Hare cycle in general with the same figure in the origin myth of the Medicine-Lodge, or that of the Fox Wi-sa'kä^a in the Trickster cycle with the same figure in the origin myth of the Midewiwin.

It will, I hope, be understood that the unity predicated of these versions is not perfect. As a matter of fact, if we look at these myths in great detail and analyse them in the way we are accustomed to analyse our own literary productions, a considerable amount of the unity disappears. The motivation is not always skilful, sometimes indeed there is no motivation at all, and on the other hand certain episodes, motifs, themes, and characterizations seem at variance with the general character of the plot or the hero. Occasionally one finds a myth perfect from the literary point of view, that is, our literary point of view.¹ As such, for instance, I regard the Winnebago myth of "The Traveller." Very few perfect ones, however, were obtained. In the main we find quite a large number of defects of detail interfering with the unity of the plot. It is, however, just these defects that are of the greatest significance in a discussion of Indian mythology, as we will now try to show.

Many of the myths obtained in North America are, as we have seen, found in two distinct types of versions, one in which they have not, to any appreciable extent, been subjected to

¹ The Indian's point of view differs, of course, markedly from our own in a number of respects. These will be discussed in the section on "The novelette as remodelled by the author-raconteur." It should, however, be borne in mind that in many essential respects the art of story-telling is alike among all mankind.

literary workmanship and one in which they have. What significance is there in the existence of these two types? Why has not one, for instance, displaced the other, and what exactly is the relation of the one to the other? It seems to me that the answer to this question is simple, the one represents the myth as folk-lore, the other as literature. The one is static, of the nature of formulæ toward which the individual takes a passive attitude; the other is dynamic, of the nature of free elements with which a specially gifted individual plays and which he endeavours to weld into a literary unit. In other words, the first type of version represents our fairy tale. Fairy tales we know have no real plot, but consist of a series of incidents strung together in an indefinite way. All the incidents, themes, and motifs which belong to the general folkloristic background are to be found in them. Owing to the fact that they have become largely formulaic in character, they are handed down in much the same way from generation to generation.

The relation of the myth as such to the myth as novelette is a very direct one. Just as among the Greeks, so among the Indians, the main subject matter of their literature is based on their mythology. There is, it is true, a not inconsiderable body of real tales among the Indians, consisting of specific happenings that have been cast into a literary mould, but with these we have no concern here. However, in thus bodily taking over their mythology for their literary themes, the Indian author-raconteurs took with them a large amount of the lack of coherence and poor motivation of the myths and only in cases of fairly perfect workmanship has this been eliminated. Similar things have taken place in our own literature. In the dramas of Shakespeare, especially in his early work, we find at times a number of situations that are quite out of place and poorly motivated, explained when recourse is had to the sources from which he drew his plots.¹

The novelette, then, is generally only a myth cast in an imperfect literary mould. The contrast between the myth and its novelette form is not anything like as great as that which existed,

¹ Two such situations come to my mind: one, the seemingly incongruous fact that Romeo is represented as being in love when the play opens; the second, Hamlet's failure to kill his uncle when he finds him in prayer. Both these situations are poorly motivated and can be most intelligibly explained when the original sources of the plots are consulted.

for instance, between Greek mythology and the subject-matter of the Greek plays. Just as among the latter, however, so among the Indians, incidents, episodes, etc., have in the hands of skilful author-raconteurs become entirely subordinated to a general theme. The Wrath of Achilles finds its counterpart in the Twins' Search for their Blankets, in the Enmity of the Water-spirit and the Thunderbird, and in the Hare's Succour of the Human Race.

It is perhaps along these lines—the lack of complete literary remodelling—that the figure of the trickster can best be explained. Assuming the original existence of a series of clownish adventures grouped around an indefinite personage, all that is needed for an understanding of the trickster's rôle in North America, with its apparent contradictions of buffoon and benefactor, is to imagine a partial literary remodelling of the older myth. It is quite clear from myth collections made among the Winnebago, Sauk and Fox, Ojibwa, and others that Wak'djuk'a'ga, Wi'sa'kâ^a, and Nenebojo have, in the main, become different personages in the ritualistic myths. They have become conscious benefactors. But as this character has merely been added to the older conception without any systematic attempt having been made always to harmonize the older with the newer conception, a peculiar incongruity has resulted which has sorely puzzled mythologists. The interpretation I have ventured to give here explains, it seems to me, the nature and significance of this incongruity in conception in a simple and adequate manner and does not leave as many inexplicable features as the interpretations of Brinton and Boas.

Although I have rather insisted upon the association of the trickster with a ritual as the reason for the development of his rôle as benefactor, such a rôle may have developed in a number of other ways. The possibility for such a growth is given in the fact that the trickster is one of the very oldest figures in the mythology of the human race and must have, in almost all cases, become identified with the race of heroes and creators.

In speaking before of the myth as static, as a cultural element toward which the individual assumed a passive attitude, we did not have in mind so much the myth as the myth elements.

There are innumerable variants of the trickster cycle, but this variability in the selection of episodes, motifs, dramatis personæ, etc., is not really conditioned by literary considerations. It is due mainly to two facts; first, to a lack of definite association between episodes and motifs, it often being of little consequence what particular ones are selected from the vast stock-in-trade of any given folkloristic background; and, secondly, to borrowing both from within the tribe itself and from without. What we find here are passive accretions, losses, readjustments, etc., not really comparable to the conscious subordination of the parts to the whole or to the specific "thematic" developments of literary productions.¹

THE MYTH AS TRANSMITTED.

The Indian has a firm belief in the existence of a "correct" version for each myth, which seems to evidence itself in his refusal to tell a myth unless he knows it perfectly. The moment

¹ Swanton has discussed some of these problems in his paper entitled "Some practical aspects of the study of myths," *Journ. of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 5, 6, in a general but very suggestive manner. He says, "Broadly we may distinguish between those myths which appear to be the special property of the people among whom they are found, and those which may be shown to be exotic. When a myth is learned by an individual belonging to another tribe, but still located in the country from which it was obtained, we have simple repetition of that myth. When, however, it is applied to some place or people within the limits of the tribe borrowing, it may be said to be 'adopted;' and, if the scene of it is laid at some particular place, it may be said to be 'relocalized.' When it is taken into an older story of the tribe borrowing it, we have 'incorporation.' This incorporation may be due to one of several causes. Stories referring to the origin of any natural feature or custom would by a Haida or Tlingit naturally be incorporated into the Raven story, because the larger number of such stories are gathered there. In other cases two stories are combined merely because they present certain superficial similarities, and we then have 'combination on account of similars.' Two stories resembling each other closely may in certain details become fused and reduced to one, or there may be 'transfusion of elements' between them. In still another case we have a kind of 'myth metathesis,' the hero of one narrative having become a monster overcome by the hero in the other. 'Alteration of motive' occurs where a myth told for one purpose in one place is given a different explanation in another, here accounting for a certain crest, there for a place name, a custom, or the origin of a secret society. 'Mythification' might be applied to that presented by an historical Haida war-story into which has been implanted the common mythic story of a man ascending to the sky-world and throwing down timbers or coals thence. More important is the process by which a tale is rendered more and more consistent either (1) to agree with altered tribal circumstances, or (2) to keep pace with a rising level of intelligence and a consequently greater demand for consistency. The first of these is that process which gives rise to many folk-etymologies, explanations of names and things which have nothing to do with their real origin; while the second results in those elaborate attempts to explain myths as allegorical representations of real events. 'Ritualization of myths' takes place when an attempt is made to weave together the sacred legends into a consistent tribal, clan, or society story, the telling of which is frequently accompanied by external ceremonies. . . ."

we try, however, to control this belief by comparing different versions of the same myth, this belief does not seem justified. As a matter of fact, among the Winnebago I have called an informant's attention to the difference between his version and another one obtained and he expressed no surprise, saying that there were different ways of telling this particular myth, depending upon the band in the Medicine-Dance to which he belonged. Such instances as this make it seem probable that the Indian does not really postulate a tribal version, but one associated with much smaller units. Among tribes living in definite village groups we might expect to have a myth vary from village to village; among other tribes from camp to camp or even from family to family. The question that we have to answer then is how, in myth collections obtained to-day, we are to interpret our variants. Let us first discuss intertribal variants.

There seems to be little doubt that a number of distinct myth-centres existed in North America, between which diffusion has taken place from time immemorial. In addition to these large centres there also grew up smaller areas with characteristic ways of telling certain myths and with a marked tendency toward grouping together certain episodes, toward using certain motifs and dramatis personæ, and even, it may be said, toward employing a definite type of plot elaboration. It is with these smaller centres and the variability within them, that we wish to deal specifically. Dixon has summarized the data for one such area in his paper entitled "The Mythology of the Central and Eastern Algonkins," and as it is of considerable importance for our discussion, we will quote it in extenso.¹

"At the outset we may divide the whole mass of these tales into two parts—those which form a more or less connected series recounting the birth and adventures of the two brothers, ending with the deluge and the re-creation of the world; and, on the other hand, those other tales which recount the exploits of the culture-hero alone, some of which are of the trickster type.

"Taking this more or less connected cycle, we may separate it, for purposes of comparison, into four portions—the origin

¹ *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXII, pp. 6-8.

and birth of the hero and his brother or brothers, the brother's death, the deluge, and the re-creation of the world. As a whole, the cycle as told shows two contrasting forms, an Eastern and a Western. Considering the latter of these, it is evident, that so far as the first part is concerned, there is considerable variation. The Ojibwa, Menominee, Pottawatomi and Ottawa have in common two incidents of the virgin or abnormal birth and the death of the mother. These features are lacking in the Fox, while there are no tales relative to the origin of the culture-hero given from the Cree and Sauteaux. While the Ojibwa, Menominee and Ottawa agree in there being but two brothers, Fox and Pottawatomi both speak of four. Menominee and Ottawa agree in associating the younger brother with the wolf, whereas the former stands alone in having one of the brothers die at birth, to be later resuscitated as a companion for the other. The most noteworthy difference, however, in this first portion of the cycle, lies in the appearance among the Pottawatomi and Ottawa of the Flintman as one of the brothers: of his opposition and enmity to the culture-hero; and final destruction by the latter, as a result of what may be called the "deceitful confidence." These various elements are typically Iroquoian, and are found most fully developed, apparently among the Wyandot-Huron.

"The second part of the cycle also shows variety. Among the Menominee and Pottawatomi, the Ojibwa and the Ottawa, the culture-hero's brother is killed by evil water-frequenting manitous, when the brother, neglecting his elder brother's warning, crosses a lake on the ice. The Menominee and Pottawatomi agree in the return of the brother in the form of a ghost, and in his departure westward to be the guardian of the land of the dead. These elements do not appear in the Ojibwa or Ottawa, however. A somewhat similar combination appears in the Fox, where the incident of the lake does not occur, the manitous killing the culture-hero's brother, after decoying him away to a distance. The incident of the ghost's return is, however, present. The affiliation of the Cree-Sauteaux in this portion of the cycle is again unknown, for lack of data.

"For the third part there is fuller material, as, although the incidents are not available from the Pottawatomi, both

Cree and Saulteaux may here be taken account of. As far as regards the incident of the "bird informant" Cree, Saulteaux, Ojibwa and Fox stand together. In the "stump disguise" and the wounding of the manitous, all are in accord except the Fox, which here has the unique incident of the floating spider-web. The Menominee has also a special incident in the introduction of the ball game. In the impersonation of the Frog shaman by the culture-hero, and his subsequent completion of the revenge by killing the manitous, all are in accord except the Ottawa, which lacks this incident. All in all, the Cree, Saulteaux, Ojibwa, and Menominee are in closest agreement in this part of the cycle.

"In the essential elements of the deluge, the escape from it, the "earth-diver" and the reconstruction of the world, all the tribes are in substantial accord. The Menominee-Ojibwa alone have the incident of the stretching tree, and the Cree-Ojibwa alone tell of the measuring of the new earth by the wolf. Taken as a whole, all the members of the Western and Central groups form a fairly accordant body. The Fox, having several unique features, stands somewhat apart, as does the Pottawatomi, by reason of its strong Iroquoian element.

"Turning now to the Eastern tribes, it appears at a glance that there is little in common with the tribes just discussed. There is here the incident of the abnormal birth, but this is also found among the Iroquois and widely elsewhere. Among the Abnaki there is the association of the culture-hero's brother with the wolf, but all the remainder of the cycle is missing. The only other points of contact with the cycle as described, lie in the opposition of the two brothers, and the slaying of one by the other as a result of the "deceitful confidence." These incidents are, however, typically Iroquoian, and are found only in the Ottawa and Pottawatomi farther west. Practically, therefore, we may say that the cycle found in fairly accordant form through the west is here wholly lacking.

"In a consideration of the other incidents relating to the culture-hero, we unfortunately have little information relating to the Pottawatomi or the tribes of the central group, and must thus confine the comparisons largely to the other western tribes

and those of the east. Of incidents not falling into the connected cycle just discussed, there are about eighteen, an investigation of whose distribution reveals the following points. About half of these, including such as the "hoodwinked dancers," "stolen feast," "rolling rock," "body punished," "reflection devices," "tree holds prisoner," and "sun trap," are common to a group composed of the Cree, *Saulteaux*, Fox, and *Menominee*, the *Ojibwa* having but three out of eight. The other half, including the "wolf companions," "Jonah," "Hippogrif," "caught by the head," "visit to the culture-hero," and "bungling host," are common to the group made up of the *Saulteaux*, *Ojibwa*, Fox, and *Menominee*. In other words, the *Saulteaux-Menominee-Fox* have a series of about eighteen incidents in common, one-half of which are also found among the Cree, and the other half among the *Ojibwa*.

"With the Eastern group there is almost as slight an agreement in the class of incidents as in the connected cycle. Four incidents only are found to agree—the "hoodwinked dancers," the "rolling rock," "visit to the culture-hero," and the "bungling host." The latter, at least, is of such wide distribution that its importance in this case may be regarded as slight."

The variability in the versions of this Two-Brother myth is, after all, inconsiderable. Let us see of what type they are. We have first the abnormal birth of the hero, present in some and absent in others; then a variability in the number of *dramatis personae* and in the nature of their relation to one another, whether friendly or inimical; third, differences in the fate of the brother; and fourth, differences in the nature of the hero's disguise when seeking revenge.

The abnormal birth is part of the usual formula for the hero. It may, however, disappear if of little importance for his characterization. In the Fox version used by Dixon we are dealing with a ritualistic myth that has undergone marked literary remodelling where the author-raconteur seems to have had two marked themes, revenge for the death of the hero's brother, and the succour of the human race, and everything has been subordinated to these themes. The retention of the entire folk-lore hero formula was quite unnecessary. Among the *Winnebago*,

in the origin myth of the Medicine Dance, the hero, although regarded as a creation of Earthmaker, still retains in vestigial form this part of the old hero formula, although it has been skillfully motivated.

In the death of the mother we are probably dealing with the persistence of a motif that is of considerable importance in the separate myth of the birth of Nenebojo. There is also present an evident assimilation here with the Twin myth, where the mother is generally killed by an ogre. We may also be dealing with part of the hero formula, for not only must the hero be born of a virgin, but he must be born before his time, generally in seven months with the consequent death of his mother.

The variability in the number of heroes is probably due to a partial confusion of this myth with the independent myth of the birth of the hero, where he is regarded as one of the four cardinal points. It is the confusion with the same myth that probably accounts for the change from a friendly to an inimical attitude of the heroes.

The association of the brother with the land of the dead is constant for all these tribes, it having been recently found among the Ojibwa too, but apparently only among those tribes where a ritual is connected with it, like the Menominee, Potawatami, Fox, and Winnebago, is it particularly motivated.

That the hero's disguise should in all but one case be a "stump," shows how closely this particular motif was associated with the Two-Brother myth in this particular area.

Summing up, we may say that we are dealing here with a version of the Two-Brother myth that is fairly constant within a restricted area, that the differences found are of an accidental nature or are connected either with the incomplete use of the hero formula or with ritualistic associations. Nowhere, the Fox version always excepted, have they resulted from attempts at literary remodelling.

All the foregoing changes have arisen during the transmission of the myth from one generation to another, and we may, therefore, assume that in the transmission of this particular version of a folk-lore-myth, not only has the plot been kept practically intact in most of its details, but that even a constancy

may exist in the details and the sequence of the episodes and motifs. Such a fixity in the associations of plot, episodes, and motifs, with an apparent absence of literary remodelling, is, however, not common. We would ordinarily expect to find only a few episodes or motifs definitely associated, as in the different folk-lore versions of the "Twins."

THE NOVELETTE AS TRANSMITTED.

The literary remodelling of the folk-lore myth or novelette, as we will now call it, has certainly gone on for many generations, longer in some tribes, of course, and shorter in others. A number of myth versions will consequently represent in reality novelettes that have deviated so far from the original folk-lore-myth on which they were based that it is as impossible to reconstruct this original myth with their help, as it would be to reconstruct the primitive versions of the Greek myths from the literary versions known to us. However, we are much better off among the Indians than among the Greeks in this respect—that folk-lore versions of the myths have been transmitted with which these literary versions may be, at times, compared. We have, then, one means of determining, within certain limits, the changes a novelette has undergone. The study of these changes will also be facilitated as soon as we know first, in more detail the rôle of the author-raconteur, who unquestionably represents the main agency in the remodelling, and secondly, their approximate number in different tribes and different generations.

The general opposition against change is perhaps more marked in the case of the novelette than in that of the folk-lore-myth and is evidenced at times in a contemptuous attitude toward the "radicals" who tell myths differently from their fathers. It should also be remembered that the novelette was on the whole neither as generally known nor as popular as the myth and was probably transmitted along distinct family lines. This is particularly true of adventures of ancestors and fasting experiences that have been cast into a literary mould, and it may also be true of the common realistic tale

not based on mythological subject matter. If to the above reasons we add the fact that in the novelette the different elements of the plot form a more or less fixed unit, we should expect to find a fairly intact transmission, in some cases. Some of the versions must then represent old literary forms and old literary interests. In order to determine this an exhaustive study would have to be made of the mythology-literature of a tribe and a large number of variants of each myth would have to be collected. When this has been done, we will, I am certain, be in a better position to judge of the significance of such features as the star interpretations of the Pawnee, the human heroes of the Eskimo, the explanatory element, etc.

THE NOVELETTE AS REMODELLED BY THE AUTHOR-RACONTEUR.

It was formerly assumed that the Indian's reverence for the past bound him in shackles that only the very few could break; that cultural possessions were transmitted just as they had been received. The apparent deviations were supposed to be due to unevenness in the power of transmitting exactly what had been heard. This factor in cultural changes has been vastly overrated, it seems to me. On no theory of unevenness in transmission can certain of the differences between versions of the same myth or novelette be accounted for. Even a cursory study must make it clear that we are dealing here with factors of a very specific kind. Let us see what they are.

Any one who has spent any time among Indians must have been impressed by the fact that only a few Indians in any tribe have the reputation of being excellent raconteurs. And it is a different kind of excellence with which each raconteur is credited, if we are to judge from the Winnebago and Ojibwa. Among the former, where I made definite inquiries, one man was famous for the humorous touches which he imparted to every tale; another, for the fluency with which he spoke and the choice of his language; a third, for his dramatic delivery; a fourth, for the radical way in which he handled time-worn themes; a fifth, for his tremendous memory; a sixth, for the accuracy with which he adhered to the "accepted" version; etc. As

born raconteurs, with a different type of genius, they told the story for the sake of story telling, as raconteurs have done in all ages. They used their specific gifts to attain the greatest effect. For most of them it would be wholly impossible to tell a tale exactly in the same way, even if it had been obtained from a skilful raconteur. We know that the artist who has obtained complete mastery over his technique invariably plays with his art. In a similar way the raconteur who has obtained complete mastery over his technique plays with his material and it is this play that becomes an important factor in the origin of different versions.

The forms in which this play instinct will manifest itself are, of course, manifold. It may lie in the characterization of different personages by special phonetical devices; by gestures; by exaggerating certain incidents or overdrawing certain traits of the characters; and finally—and for our purposes, of paramount importance—it may lie in the substitution of one episode for another, one theme for another, or one motif for another. Even granted that older literary models and other causes hold him in check, the changes that will take place in the novelette, under the influence of the factors enumerated above, are considerable.

One might suppose that such a conception of the rôle of the author-raconteur would imply tremendous changes in the novelette, as it passes from generation to generation. Theoretically this is true and if we do not find as great departures from the normal version of a given novelette as anticipated, this is due to the improbability of a line of skilful author-raconteurs applying themselves to any given novelette, reinforced by the conservative tendency of a group which will not countenance any marked originality in the handling of traditional themes.

Every generation will, I think, have its original author-raconteurs, although unquestionably their most original treatment of myths will not survive them. A number of these are, however, likely to fall into the hands of investigators, who must consequently remember that these deviations hardly

represent the rate of variability of any given myth from generation to generation.¹

PSYCHOLOGICAL-LITERARY ELEMENTS IN THE PLOT.

The preceding discussion was concerned with the probability of the origin of the many different versions of myths through the free exercise of the author-raconteur's play instinct. We shall now discuss the probability for still further divergence through the exercise of the author-raconteur's literary-psychological instinct.

The Indian author-raconteur must have realized as much as any of our own novelists that the effective telling of a story depended on a number of devices, the development of a dénouement, cumulative effect, etc.; also that he was dealing with certain psychological situations. It certainly is not presuming too much to say that he had sufficient power to analyse his myths and separate them in a rough way into the component elements of which they were formed. Let us illustrate this by examining the plot of the Winnebago myth of "Holy One." What the author-raconteur had in mind was clearly the following plot and the following psychological situations.

Scene I. Holy One's brother must die. He is warned not to take a certain road.

Scene II. The slayers of Holy One's brother must be discovered and punished. Holy One must discover their identity from some unwilling agent. He must transform himself, wound but not kill the slayers. Then he must find out what has become of the slayers, again from an unwilling agent, kill the agent, disguise himself in his shape, and finally kill the slayers of his brother.

Scene III. He must be pursued and escape.

Scene IV. He must attempt to restore his brother to life and fail.

¹ I know particularly of two Winnebago who have the reputation of telling myths remarkably well, but of deviating considerably from the older versions. The older people look askance at them, but the younger, especially the members of the family, seem to show no displeasure. Under ordinary conditions, we might here have a test case of the perpetuation of markedly divergent versions.

The death of Holy One is not directly motivated in all versions of this myth, his death, however, being assumed.¹

Let us see how certain of the above themes are treated in detail; for instance, the manner in which Holy One discovers the slayers of his brother. The motivation is various. The following is the Omaha version.

"On the bank of the stream the grass was lying in good condition. There he (Haxige) lay down. As he lay two ducks came to him. They went diving. And they came up again. One said as follows: 'My friend, when Haxige's younger brother was killed, I had a great abundance of food. How was it with you?' 'My friend, I did not have a good time. Only the little finger was left for me; and I said that no matter when I saw him, I would tell him (Haxige) about his own,' said the duck.

"When Haxige heard it he became a leaf. Having fallen on the water, the leaf went floating in the space between the ducks. When he reached the very place he seized the ducks by the neck."²

The following is the Ojibwa version obtained at Rama, Ontario:

"As he (Nenebojo) was walking along the shore of a lake, he saw a Kingfisher sitting on a branch of a tree, that was bending over the lake, intently looking at something in the water. 'What are you looking at?' asked Nenebojo. The Kingfisher pretended not to hear him. Then Nenebojo said again, 'If you will tell me what you are looking at, I will make you look very beautiful. I will paint your feathers.' The bird gladly accepted the offer, and as soon as Nenebojo had painted his feathers, he said, 'I am looking at Nenebojo's brother whom the water-spirits have killed and whose skin they are using as a door-flap.'³

The Winnebago version is given on pages 22-24.

In the next episode Holy One must wound the water-spirits and thereupon disguise himself in such a way that the water-

¹ Cf., for instance, the first part of the Fox origin myth of the Midewiwin and the end of the Omaha myth of Haxige's Adventures. In the Fox version we have both a specific motivation—the spirits' enmity against Wi'sa'kä's—and the traditional belief that Wi.sa.kä's brother is the ruler of the realms of the dead.

² J. O. Dorsey, *ibid.*, p. 240.

³ P. Radin, "Some myths and tales of the Ojibwa of southeastern Ontario," pp. 19, 20.

spirits who know they are being pursued are nevertheless deceived.

This is the Omaha motivation.

"Haxige became an eagle and departed. Behold, the monsters lay flat on their backs . . . 'Haxige is coming towards you,' was said. He failed . . . 'What shall I do to get even with them?' Haxige thought. Then he became a leaf again . . . 'Haxige is coming toward you,' was said. He failed. Then he became like a blue-backed bird-hawk . . . 'Haxige is coming toward you,' he said. He failed . . . At length when the fourth day arrived he became a grass-snake, etc."

Among the Ojibwa of southeastern Ontario we find the following commonly used motivation:

"He (Nenebojo) first pondered about what disguise he should take, so that he could approach them (the water-spirits) without being detected. 'Well,' said he to himself, 'I think I'll change myself into an old rotten stump.' This he immediately did by means of a long rod that he always carried with him.

"When the lions came out of the water to sun themselves, one of them noticed the stump and said to one of the others, 'I never saw that old stump there before. Surely it can't be Nenebojo?' But the one he was addressing said, 'Indeed I have seen that stump before.' Then a third one came over to look, in order to make certain. He broke a piece off and he saw that it was rotten. So they were all satisfied."¹

The Winnebago motivation shows a modification of the Omaha.

"The next morning Holy One started for the place where the water-spirits bask in the sun. On the way he caught some mice and carried them along with him. He went to the sand-bar and there he turned himself into an old stump of a willow-tree full of mice's nests and mice. Suddenly the lake began to roar and the two spirits floated to the surface in the middle of the lake. Suddenly one of them said, 'Look, there is Holy One!' Then both dived back into the water again. After a while they came up again, but quickly dived back. A third and fourth time they

¹ P. Radin, "Some myths and tales of the Ojibwa of southeastern Ontario," p. 20.

did this. Finally one of them said, 'Oh, that is merely an old stump. It has always been there.' 'Well, if that is the case, you had better go and look at it.' Then one of them went over to inspect it and the mice ran out in every direction. He then said, 'Surely, this can't be Holy One, for if it were he would not have changed himself into a stump with living mice in it. Besides that, I told you it always stood there, but you wouldn't believe me.'

In a similar way it could be shown by comparing other episodes and themes that the motivation is characteristically different in different versions of the same myth. How are we to explain this variety in motivation? All we have to assume is a skilful raconteur-author who seizes the different moments of importance in a plot and plays with them, now motivating one in one way, now in another, so that he may best fix the listener's attention and derive the greatest artistic pleasure. In other words, over and above the precise form in which he obtains a myth stands his relation as an artist to the dramatic situations contained in it and to his audience.

With the psychological situations firmly in his mind the author-raconteur selects from the relatively large stock-in-trade of themes, episodes, and motifs belonging to his cultural background, those he cares to use for developing his plot, showing in some cases a conservative, in others a radical tendency. He may even add entirely new motifs, but this does not seem to be common. As this selection is intimately bound up with the individuality of the author-raconteur, it is presumably impossible to tell exactly what he is likely to select.¹

DIFFUSION OF MYTHS FROM THE ABOVE POINT OF VIEW.

Let us now see what bearing our analysis has upon the problem of myth diffusion. Is it, for instance, the whole myth-complex or the plot that is borrowed as such, or are the episodes, motifs, or themes borrowed separately? No thorough study

¹ I am leaving out entirely the important subject of the literary devices used in the novelette, reserving a discussion for a separate paper. Suffice it to say that this aspect of the myth-complex more than corroborates the importance assigned to the author-raconteur in the literary remodelling of the myth.

of this aspect of myth diffusion has as yet been made; but the general impression one gets from a comparison of the similarities of the mythology of the different areas in North America is that while whole myth complexes or very general plots may at times be borrowed *in toto*, this is rare. The similarities seem to be confined generally to specific themes, motifs, and episodes.

Investigations of the influence of European on Indian mythology ought to furnish us with excellent test cases. Take, for example, the Tar-baby episode or the Race of the Tortoise and the Deer, both of which are probably of European origin. Does their presence in a myth indicate that the entire myth was originally of European origin and has been completely assimilated by the Indians, leaving but these two vestiges? If these two episodes generally were found in association with other episodes of a myth-complex of unquestioned European origin, there might be some justification for this assumption. But this is not the case, the tar-baby episode or some close variant of it apparently occurring as a free unit in a number of myths. The same is true of the wishing-table motif, which occurs in a Winnebago myth that is clearly aboriginal. A study of Rand's collection of Micmac myths would yield a large number of additional examples. In Prof. Boas' discussion of the tale of John the Bear and the Seven Heads, the diffusion of individual episodes as such is indicated again.¹

What still further militates against the assumption that myth complexes may be borrowed and then degenerate, leaving only a few vestiges behind, is the fact that in those cases where we know that myths have been borrowed *in toto* there seems to be no degeneration even when the myth has been almost completely remodelled in terms of the specific Indian culture. I obtained for instance a version of Snow-white among the Ojibwa of southeastern Ontario which had been completely "indianized" yet which retained all the episodes and motifs of the Grimm version. It seems also likely from a study of the Zapotecan myths collected in Mexico that a European myth was at times borrowed *in toto* and that some striking episode was subsequently

¹ F. Boas "Notes on Mexican folk-lore," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXV, 1912, pp. 204-260.

detached from it and used as a free element. This seems to be true, for instance, of the robbers' cave of the Ali Baba tale.

What it is that determines the introduction of a new myth or of new episodes, etc., it is somewhat difficult to say before specific investigations have been made. It depends very likely largely on chance, the individuality of the borrower, the nature of the specific mythology, and the duration and intimacy of the contact between tribes. In some cases, notably in Spanish America, we seem to have a complete or at least almost complete displacement of the Indian mythology by that of the Spaniards. To ascribe that solely to the intimacy of the contact between the Spaniards and the Indians and the duration of that contact seems to me hasty. The Æsopian fables and the riddles found in Mexico are unquestionably European, yet some significance may attach to the fact that they were so readily adopted by the Indians. Similarly, if the Coyote and the Rabbit cycle found in Mexico turn out eventually to be of unquestioned European origin, the fact that the ancient Mexicans undoubtedly possessed a Coyote and Rabbit cycle may have some bearing upon the fact that the European cycle displaced the older Indian one. In other words, there is likely to be as much significance in the displacement of older myths by newer ones as in the rejection of newer ones.

In the majority of cases, where diffusion occurred in a normal way, we may, therefore, assume that the separate units of the myth were borrowed. Now the borrowing of a myth is, of course, rarely an inert transmission of a tale. An individual brings back to his tribe not simply what he has heard but what has struck his fancy. He naturally interprets the story in terms of his own mythology. He will probably instantaneously associate some of his episodes with his trickster, others with his transformer, etc. When he subsequently narrates his own trickster or transformer cycle, what more natural than that he substitute this new episode, etc., for the older one or simply add it to the older?

We have, then, in myth-borrowing to distinguish in all cases what has been borrowed, whether the complete myth or individual component elements, and we have always to bear in

mind that borrowing is a selective process. The problems connected with myth borrowing thus assume a far greater complexity than we are apt to give them.¹

THE LITERARY INTERPRETATION AND THE POSITION OF EHRENREICH.

In a previous section we pointed out that the position of Ehrenreich and the German theorists in general centred principally on their conception of a single original and correct version of every myth.² Their prime object was to discover a way in which they could reconstruct these primary versions from the divergent versions with which they were acquainted. To Ehrenreich that seems to have been a comparatively easy matter and could be accomplished by the proper interpretation of certain motifs. "Die Motive geben den ursprünglichen Inhalt des Mythos an, weil sie dasjenige Element sind, das auf konkreter Grundlage beruhend am festesten mit der ursprünglichen Naturanschauung verbunden bleibt, ungeachtet aller sekundären Formveränderungen."³

It is rather significant that Ehrenreich resorts to ultimate psychological proofs to establish his position. In many places of his work it is indeed impossible to determine how intimately connected his specific mythological data are with his psychological formulation.⁴ In this respect his treatment resembles that of

¹ Perhaps a critical examination of myth-borrowing may show that the greater the divergence of a given myth complex from the type prevalent in the recipient culture, the greater the tendency to borrow the myth as a unit; and the greater the similarity, the greater the tendency of the selective agency to begin synchronously with the hearing of the myth.

² I do not know whether Ehrenreich would have admitted this, but it seems to me to be an implied corollary of his position. On page 36 of his "Allgemeine Mythologie" he says, "Jede mythische Handlung besteht aus einer ursächlich verknüpften Folge von Einzelzügen, Situationen und Akzidenzen, die aus der Naturgrundlage abgeleitet, meist sogar geradezu real daraus abgesehen sind. Diese Motive entsprechen den einzelnen Phasen des Naturvorgangs, dem sie den Charakter einer menschlichen Handlung verleihen."

As I assume that Ehrenreich is not reasoning on purely *à priori* grounds, he must have found corroboration for the above from a study of the contents of the myths.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "Die Form des Mythos hängt hauptsächlich ab von den Ideenassoziationen die sich auf der Grundvorstellung entwickeln. Sie setzen sich nicht ins ungemessene fort, sondern bewegen sich innerhalb des Anschauungskreises der Grundvorstellung, d. h. sie bleiben mit dem Naturkern begrifflich verbunden. So erzeugt die Vorstellung des Mondes als Sichelschwert, zugleich die der Handhabung dieser Waffe als Enthauptung oder Abhauung eines Wesens, unterstützt durch die Auffassung der Aurora als Blut des Verletzten" (p. 39).

Schurtz in his "Altersklassen und Geheimbünde." In the main the same critique that I have applied to the latter¹ can be applied to Ehrenreich.

The motifs, according to Ehrenreich, are conditioned by man's apperception of the phenomena of nature and what he associates with these phenomena. They thus serve as demonstrations that the myths were originally concerned with these phenomena. As a proof of this, a number of myths were pointed out that still possessed all the features of a nature-myth. Taking these, then, as a starting point and as reinforcing his primary assumption of a single original and correct version, Ehrenreich reconstructed primitive mythology.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, it is quite essential for Ehrenreich's theory that motifs and episodes serve as a means for reconstructing his original versions, and it is just here that the importance of the literary analysis becomes apparent; for we have shown that the motifs, themes, and episodes are used as free elements and are altered not through accidental causes but by the exercise of an author-raconteur's artistic instinct. Consequently, even if many of these motifs did conceivably belong to old versions of a myth, there is no possible way of discovering that now. We know, of course, that nature-myths exist, but, considering the nature of the literary tendencies at work, it seems quite justifiable to assume that certain author-raconteurs showed a preference for developing nature-myths or for interpreting any myth in terms of natural phenomena. There is abundant evidence for such a tendency in the mythologies of many North American tribes. Among the Pawnee, for instance, the identification of heroes with stars has become almost a formula.

It will thus be seen that the discussion of North American mythology from a literary point of view presents the problems customarily dealt with in an entirely different light, and, if it does nothing else, it demonstrates at least how intricate are the facts involved and how great the data still to be obtained before ultimate problems can be attacked.

¹ Cf. P. Radin, "The Ritual and significance of the Winnebago medicine dance," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXV, 1911, pp. 149-208.

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