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**The transformation of tradition: A study of Zitkala Sa and
Mourning Dove, two transitional American Indian writers**

Fisher, Alice Poindexter, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1979

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1979

THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION
A STUDY OF ZITKALA SA AND MOURNING DOVE
TWO TRANSITIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN WRITERS

by

ALICE POINDEXTER FISHER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
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Abstract

THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION A STUDY OF ZITKALA SA AND MOURNING DOVE TWO TRANSITIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN WRITERS

by

Alice Poindexter Fisher

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The nineteenth century marked a period of dramatic upheaval for many American Indian tribes, who, within a brief span, suddenly found themselves dispossessed of their ancestral lands, depleted in numbers, and confined to reservations in the wake of America's great expansion westward. Fearful that their oral traditions would disappear forever as the tribal community became more and more fragmented under the demoralizing conditions of reservation life, some American Indians began to write down the legends and folktales of their tribes, as well as their own personal narratives, in an effort to preserve their history and culture for posterity. Writing became a means not only to perpetuate tradition in the face of cultural disintegration, but it also gave Native Americans a chance to tell their side of the story to a wider audience. By the end of the nineteenth century, a written literature based on tribal oral traditions was beginning to emerge

that would reach fruition in the 1960s and 1970s in the works of contemporary American Indians.

For those early Indian writers, the movement from an oral mode of cultural expression to a written form was difficult and challenging. Not only did authors have to choose which traditions should be written down and then struggle with the problem of how the act of writing might transform those traditions, but they also had to translate their stories into English because, with few exceptions, English was the language of literacy for Indians. Zitkala Sa, a Dakota Sioux of the Yankton band, and Mourning Dove, an Okanogan, are two of the early Indian writers who attempted to make the transition from oral to written form and to bridge the gap between tradition and assimilation. It is the purpose of this study to examine their lives and works to understand the influences operating upon them as they became literary counterparts of the oral storytellers of their respective tribes. What stories could they tell? What was the reaction of other Indians? What were their personal goals as writers, and what did they accomplish?

Zitkala Sa (1876-1938) published most of her work at the turn of the century. Her collection of traditional Sioux tales, Old Indian Legends, appeared in 1901, and the autobiographical essays that were to be collected later in American Indian Stories (1921) were initially published in Harpers and The Atlantic Monthly in 1900 and 1901.

Mourning Dove (1888-1936) published Co-ge-wea; the Half Blood, perhaps the first novel by an American Indian woman, in 1927, and Coyote Stories, a collection of traditional Okanogan tales, in 1933.

Witnesses of the end of an era that seemed destined to extinction

with each death of a tribal storyteller, both Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove were acutely aware of their role in preserving their culture, at the same time they were searching for their own individual voices. In their movement between the two landscapes of their existence--the remembered past and the alien present; the Indian and white worlds; tradition and change--they anticipate the liminal position of the Indian that will later be reflected in the theme of alienation in contemporary Indian literature. As the observer and preserver of culture and tradition, the Indian writer stands outside the tribal circle, while the oral storyteller is the center of the circle, and that may point to the single greatest difference between oral and written forms. The one is the expression of the community, the other of the individual. The oral tradition represents a collective experience and is circular in that everything comes back to the center, the tribe. The writer breaks that circle, losing some of the vitality that has characterized the oral dynamic between storyteller and audience, but gaining in the process the possibilities of communicating to a greater audience and perhaps acquiring a deeper understanding of one's relationship to heritage, culture, place. This study chronicles the lives and literary efforts of Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove as they make the transition from oral to written form and struggle with the problem of transforming tradition.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To study American Indian literature is to study the art of storytelling because storytelling is the heart of the oral tradition, the means by which those stories and legends, myths and folklore, poetry and song that constitute the memory banks of tradition are handed down from one generation to the next. Of storytelling, N. Scott Momaday has said it "is imaginative and creative in nature. It is an act by which man strives to realize his capacity for wonder, meaning and delight. It is also a process in which man invests and preserves himself in the context of ideas. Man tells stories in order to understand his experience, whatever it may be. The possibilities of storytelling are precisely those of understanding the human experience."¹ And for Leslie Marmon Silko, "You don't have anything/if you don't have the stories."² Storytelling is the art of clarifying relationships between individuals and their landscapes, communities, visions--it bonds the past to the present and ensures the future.

Within preliterate tribal cultures, oral storytelling was formulaic and subject to tribal rituals. Origin tales and migration stories were told in the winter evenings when the snakes were underground and the tribe had settled into one area for the season. This was the period of contemplation--a time to reflect on one's place in the universe. Animal stories, on the other hand, had fewer taboos attached to them and were told primarily in the summer. Oral storytelling was and is very much a communal event, a means of binding the community together through a remembered heritage, serving as a source of entertainment and

instruction as well as a safety valve to release those repressed fears and desires brought about by the highly structured social order of the tribe. Integral to oral storytelling is performance, those voice intonations, gestures, facial expressions, verbal embellishments that exhibit the special gifts of individual storytellers and ensure audience participation in the oral event. The stories told may be sacred or secular, narratives of a mythic past or accounts of more recent historical events. Women as well as men may be storytellers and within some of the tribes of the Plains and the matrilineal Pueblo cultures, the grandmother is often the storyteller, passing on her knowledge of tradition and moral behavior to the young.

The place of storytelling within the oral tradition of preliterate tribal cultures is assured and has been recorded in numerous ethnographic studies, but what happens to storytelling and the oral tradition when the community begins to break down under the pressure of external conflicts, the advent of reservation life, the introduction of English-based education--in short, what happens when a way of life that has existed for centuries suddenly undergoes cataclysmic and brutal changes such as occurred for many American Indians during the nineteenth century?

While it is not the purpose here to examine all the historic odds against survival that plagued American Indians--disease, Indian wars, relocation, broken treaties--the impact of certain events must at least be mentioned. The Indian Removal Act of 1830, for example, not only ordered the eviction of almost all Indians east of the Mississippi into lands of the West, but also led to the infamous Trail of Tears and the death of 4000 Cherokees in that forced midwinter march. The 1840 Gold Rush all but eliminated the Indians of California. Despite Sitting

Bull's conquest of Custer at the Little Big Horn in 1876, the southern and northern herds of buffalo, the very core of survival for the Plains Indians, had been destroyed by 1883, and the Sun Dance had been outlawed. Replacing the policy of removal, reservations were established in 1851, Indians were admitted to Hampton Institute (originally founded for Blacks) after the Civil War, and in 1879, the first off-reservation school exclusively for Indians opened its doors in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, which provided for the assignment of small plots of land to individuals, reflected the assimilationist thrust of government Indian policy and was ultimately to reduce the remaining Indian land base from 132 to 32 million acres by 1928. In addition to loss of land, the act had disastrous consequences for those Plains Indians who found the shift from a nomadic hunting and warfare culture to a static agricultural economy almost impossible to make. Many of them turned to the newly found Ghost Dance religion, hoping to realize its promise of the return of the dead and the buffalo, but the tragedy at Wounded Knee in 1890 shattered forever any dreams of recapturing an idyllic past. Further resistance was futile.³

Dispossessed of their land and rights, threatened with the dissolution of their culture, and demoralized by confinement to reservation life, American Indian men and women began reluctantly to tell their life stories to anthropologists and ethnographers eager to record tribal lore and preserve the traditions of a rapidly disappearing era. "Memory ethnography" was to characterize American anthropology under the influence of Franz Boas and his followers for years, and as long as there were survivors of the "old days," there was a patient "horse and buggy

ethnographer" painstakingly recording "ethnographic autobiographies" or the "as told to" life stories, folktales and traditions. Among the Sioux, J. Owen Dorsey was one of the first to record their folklore in 1889. Louis Meeker and Clark Wissler followed with the publication of more Dakota myths in 1901 and 1907. James Teit became a well-known authority for his work among the Salishan tribes of British Columbia, publishing a major work on The Shuswap in 1919. Of the many anthropologists to study the Pueblo cultures, Elsie Clews Parsons may well be the best known and the most prolific. She began publishing her recorded tales of the Zuni as early as 1917 and went on to gather and publish folktales of the Laguna, Taos, and Tewa Pueblo tribes. And among the California tribes, Alfred Kroeber remains a singular authority for his impressive work on the linguistic families of California.

But in addition to telling their stories to individual anthropologists, some American Indians began to write down their own personal narratives and to retell folktales from their particular tribes for a wider audience, adhering to the concept that it might take a long time, but as Leslie Marmon Silko has said, "the story must be told. There must not be any lies." Writing became a means not only to perpetuate tradition in the face of cultural disintegration, but it also created new audiences and gave Native Americans a chance to tell their side of the story.

One of the earliest autobiographies is Autobiography of Black Hawk as Dictated by Himself To Antoine LeClair, published in 1833. In 1879, Chief Joseph's Own Story appeared, and Sarah Winnemucca Hopkin's account of Life Among the Piutes came out in 1888.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a written tradition was beginning to emerge that would reach fruition in the 1960s and '70s in the works of contemporary Native Americans. For example, Chief Simon Pokagon published Queen of the Woods, one of the first novels by an American Indian, in 1899. Charles Eastman followed with a proliferation of romanticized autobiographies and collections of Sioux folktales which he published from 1902 through 1926. In 1916, Marie McLaughlin published her first-hand account of her tribe's traditions, Myths and Legends of the Sioux. With all of these writers, and particularly with the two to be discussed in detail in this study, Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove, the question is posed: what happens to storytelling when it moves from an oral mode to a written form? What aspects of the oral tradition "live on" in American Indian literature? How should one "read" Indian literature? How is the point of view influenced by a new reading audience? Similarly, in what way does English influence the development of an American Indian literary tradition, for it should be stated at the outset that the works to be examined here are all written in English. Indeed, with few exceptions, Indian literature is written in English because it is the language of literacy for Native Americans. Ironically, the very system of reservation life that has so threatened Native cultures provides the means for preserving elements of those cultures in the formation of English-based Indian schools.

Although American Indians have been writing in one form or another for over a hundred years, relatively little critical attention has been given their work, because, until recently, almost exclusive emphasis was placed on preserving the oral traditions of various tribes. Literature

per se was viewed as "American" and mainstream, while oral traditions were "authentic" and "Indian." Often classified as folklore, the Native American oral tradition has been but one component in the body of information on tribal life catalogued by anthropologists. It is essential to understand the oral context out of which a written Indian literature emerges, but unfortunately, the study of Indian literature has been confined too often only to translations of oral material which have been approached almost exclusively from an anthropological point of view. Stated another way, the study of the creative output of American Indians has been divided into two distinct units: the oral tradition which has more often than not fallen to the anthropologists and linguists; and the written literature which has suffered general neglect, with the exception of a few excellent articles.

To date, only one full-length study of Native American literature has been published, and that is American Indian Fiction by Charles Larson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1978), which is an examination of twelve Indian writers and their works. Larson approaches the works primarily from a thematic point of view, dividing his discussion into categories formed around the period of assimilation and the period of relocation, and so forth. Insofar as he calls attention to earlier works relatively unknown to literature students and definitely focuses on the written tradition of Indian literature, his study is a milestone in opening up new literary space. The limitation of the study is Larson's failure to take any account at all of the oral traditions that inform the various works. He does not see the works as part of a continuum that grows out of a storytelling mode; rather, they are isolated

in a critical vacuum, so that statements about plot and theme tend to have a hollow ring.

And that is the point. Native American literature does have a resonance beyond its immediate form, but to begin to hear the various modulations, it is necessary to understand how the oral tradition and storytelling mesh with the written form. As Momaday has said, "literature is . . . the end-product of an evolutionary process, and the so-called 'oral tradition' is primarily a stage within that process, a stage that is indispensable and perhaps original as well."⁴ The literature written by American Indians has grown out of the oral tradition and to sever it from that cultural continuum is to do a disservice to both oral and written forms.

One of the ways to begin to understand the movement from oral to written form is to fill in the gaps of our knowledge about the early Indian writers who are transitional. It is the purpose of this study to focus on the work of two Indian women writers, Zitkala Sa, a Dakota Sioux of the Yankton band, and Mourning Dove, an Okanogan. Witnesses of the end of an era that seemed destined to extinction with each death of a tribal storyteller, Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove were two of the earliest Indian writers to tentatively venture into a foreign art form--literature--in a new language--English--to tell their own stories and to preserve that which was valuable to them. Zitkala Sa (1876-1938) published most of her work at the turn of the century. Her collection of traditional Sioux tales, Old Indian Legends, appeared in 1901, and the autobiographical essays that were to be collected later in American Indian Stories (1921) were initially published in Harpers and The Atlantic

Monthly in 1900 and 1901. Mourning Dove (1888-1936) published Co-ge-wea; the Half Blood, perhaps the first novel by an American Indian woman, in 1927, and Coyote Stories, a collection of traditional Okanogan tales, in 1933.

Both women were born and reared during their childhood years in traditional ways on or near reservations, and though they received their education in English primarily at off-reservation schools, they had a first-hand knowledge of the language, stories, and traditions of their respective tribes. Each published a collection of legends written for a children's audience that they gathered from the tribal storytellers. Both Old Indian Legends and Coyote Stories offer an opportunity for examining the transformation of traditional oral tales into written form and for comparing the kinds of stories each chose to record. Since each writes out of a different cultural background, this type of comparison is valuable because one of the problems encountered in the study of Indian literature is the tendency to group writers together because they write in English, rather than because they share a similar tribal background. A major reason for studying Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove in the context of their respective tribes is to see if, indeed, one can generalize about storytelling patterns or the influence of oral materials on literary genres.

It is also crucial in understanding the emergence of an American Indian literary tradition to see what problems Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove encountered in becoming the literary counterparts of the oral storytellers of their tribes. What stories could they tell? What was the reaction of their fellow Indians? What were their own personal

goals as writers, and what did they accomplish? Of necessity, a portion of this study is biographical simply because so little is known about the influences operating upon the early Indian writers. That knowledge, it seems, must serve to illuminate some of the reasons for the subsequent development of Indian literature.

Conscious of their role in preserving their culture, yet searching for their own individual voices, both Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove anticipate the liminal position of the Indian that will later be reflected in the theme of alienation in contemporary Indian literature. Moving between the two landscapes of their existence--the remembered past and the alien present; the Indian and white worlds; tradition and change--Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove attempt to record their experiences and cultural traditions and in doing so become early pioneers of an emerging American Indian literary tradition. The chapters that follow chronicle their lives and their literary efforts to make the transition from one mode of cultural expression to another.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

¹"The Man Made of Words," Literature of the American Indians, ed. Abraham Chapman (New York: New American Library, 1975), p. 104.

²Ceremony (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), p. 2.

³For a general historical overview of Indian-white relations, see D'Arcy McNickle, They Came Here First: The Epic of the American Indian (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1949). Another good resource is Michael Dorris's introduction to Native Americans: Five Hundred Years After (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1975). For an analysis of the Ghost Dance, see James Mooney, The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965; originally published as Part Two of the Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1892-93).

⁴Chapman, p. 105.

CHAPTER II

ZITKALA SA

A.

THE EVOLUTION OF A WRITER

In a letter to Carlos Montezuma dated 20 February 1901, Zitkala Sa writes:

As for my plans,--I do not mean to give up my literary work--but while the old people last I want to get from them their treasured ideas of life. This I can do by living among them. Thus I mean to divide my time between teaching and getting story material.¹

Later on that spring, she writes again to Montezuma from the Yankton Agency where she has gone to stay with her mother for a time, saying,

This place is full of material for stories but I am so uncertain . . . I am quite well and hope I may soon find a good writing mood--to do justice to the abandoned material around me.

(June, 1901)

Zitkala Sa had every right to feel nervous about her mission to become the literary counterpart of the oral storytellers of her tribe because she felt compelled to live up to the critical expectations of her white audience. She had already become the darling of a small literary coterie in Boston whose members were enthusiastic about the autobiographical sketches and short stories she had begun to place in Harper's and The Atlantic Monthly the year before. Ginn and Company had given her a contract for Old Indian Legends which would appear in the fall of 1901 and were anxiously awaiting material for a second book that would be, in their words, ". . . a fine series of Indian legends, the greatest that the world has ever known." And in its April issue of 1900, Harper's Bazar had included her in a column entitled "Persons Who Interest Us":

A young Indian girl, who is attracting much attention in Eastern cities on account of her beauty and many talents, is Zitkala-Sa, . . . Zitkala-Sa is of the Sioux tribe of Dakota and until her ninth year was a veritable little savage, running wild over the prairie and speaking no language but her own . . . She has also published lately a series of articles in a leading magazine . . . which display a rare command of English and much artistic feeling.

(p. 330)

Also an accomplished violinist, Zitkala Sa had studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and appeared both as a soloist and an orator with the Carlisle Indian Band to the critical acclaim of the New York Musical Courier who hailed her as "charmingly artistic and graceful." The Brooklyn Times described her recitation of Hiawatha in glowing terms and called her a "picture to be remembered." Indeed, as early as 1898, she had been singled out of a group of Sioux visiting New York by Joseph T. Keiley who made a number of photographic portraits of her that would be exhibited over the next few years in New York and abroad and eventually would become part of Alfred Steiglitz's collection. Clearly it would seem, Zitkala Sa had arrived.

But into what world? To her mother and the traditional Sioux on the reservation where she had grown up, she was highly suspect because, in their minds, she had abandoned, even betrayed, the Indian way of life by getting an education in the white man's world. To those at the Carlisle Indian School where she had taught from 1898-99, on the other hand, she was an anathema because she insisted on remaining "Indian," writing embarrassing articles such as "Why I Am A Pagan" that flew in the face of the assimilationist thrust of their education. A particularly bitter review of one of her stories appears in the 12 April,

1901 edition of The Red Man and Helper, Carlisle's newspaper, with this prefatory note:

All that Zitkalasa has in the way of literary ability and culture she owes to the good people, who, from time to time, have taken her into their homes and hearts and given her aid. Yet not a word of gratitude or allusion to such kindness on the part of her friends has ever escaped her in any line of anything she has written for the public. By this course she injures herself and harms the educational work in progress for the race from which she sprang. In a list of educated Indians whom we have in mind, some of whom have reached higher altitudes in literary and professional lines than Zitkalasa, we know of no other case of such pronounced morbidity.

The reviewer goes on to pronounce the story in question, "The Soft-hearted Sioux," morally bad. And why so? Because it challenges the very core of educational policy at Carlisle. A fictional account of the inadequacy of off-reservation schools to prepare Indians to live within their own cultures, the story is told in the first person by a young Sioux who describes the conflict he experiences in being unable to fulfill his father's desire that he become a warrior and huntsman because he has spent nine years at a missionary school and "hunted for the soft heart of Christ, and prayed for the huntsman who chased the buffalo on the plains."

Despite its sentimentality, the story raises the fundamental question of survival that was to confront all Indians educated off the reservation. What price assimilation? What does the individual sacrifice personally and culturally in striving for self-improvement through education? What sort of education equips one to survive? Are cultural survival and individual development mutually exclusive?

For Zitkala Sa, the conflict was to plague her throughout her life.

Born as Gertrude Simmons on the Yankton Reservation in South Dakota in 1876, she spent her first eight years of life on the reservation with her mother in a seemingly idyllic state of harmony, as she describes in "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," published in The Atlantic Monthly in 1900:

I was a wild little girl of seven. Loosely clad in a slip of brown buckskin, and light footed with a pair of soft moccasins on my feet, I was as free as the wind that blew my hair, and no less spirited than a bounding deer. These were my mother's pride--my wild freedom and over flowing spirit.

Educated in the traditions of the Sioux, she listened to the legends at night and learned to imitate her mother's bead work during the day. Though her mother had been married to three different white men and had lived at times off the reservation, she never learned to speak English and retained always the Sioux way of life. When Gertrude's father, a man named Felker, deserted the family before his daughter's birth, the mother decided to return to the Yankton agency to live. She also determined to give Gertrude the name of her second husband, Simmons.² Gertrude christened herself Zitkala Sa, Red Bird, when she had a falling out with her sister-in-law. She writes of the event in a letter to Montezuma:

I have a half-brother whose name is Simmons. Once my father scolded my brother; and my mother took such offense from it--that eventually it resulted in a parting--so as I grew I was called by my brother's name Simmons. I bore it a long time till my brother's wife--angry with me because I insisted upon getting an education--said I had deserted home and I might give up my brother's name "Simmons" too. Well, you can guess how queer I felt--away from my own people--home less--penniless--and even without a name! Then I chose to make a name for myself--and I guess I have made "Zitkala-Sa" known--for even Italy writes it in her language.

(June, 1901)

In creating her own name and essentially her own oral history, Zitkala Sa is well within the Dakota naming tradition. Upon birth, traditionally children were often named according to their position among their siblings; i.e., first born, second born, etc. The names distinguished not only their rank but their sex as well. Winona, for example, means the first born girl and is a name of great respect because much hope is placed upon the first child. If the first daughter distinguishes herself, she may keep the name Winona into adulthood. Most often, however, the name that becomes the "personal" name of the child is usually associated with an outstanding deed or event of some type.³ In Indian Boyhood, for example, Charles Eastman recounts that he was given the name of "Ohiyesa" or winner because his band won a foot race against another. Thus, Dakotas do not say, "What is your name?" but rather, "In what manner do they say of you?" or "According to what deed are you known?"⁴ Usually, however, the name is conferred by another upon the individual, so in naming herself, Zitkala Sa is asserting at one and the same time her independence and her cultural ties. As Zitkala Sa, she will try to recreate the spirit of her tribe in her collection of legends, though she is never able to return to Yankton permanently.

Against her mother's wishes and under the seductive pressure of the missionaries, she first leaves Yankton at age eight to study at White's Manual Institute in Wabash, Indiana. Though White's was run by the Quakers, it adhered to the policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs that Indian children would more rapidly assimilate into American society, if they were kept away from the reservation for long periods of time. Three years passed before Gertrude Simmons returned home at age eleven.

The cultural clashes experienced at the school during the painful

time she was learning English and trying to accommodate to American customs seemed insignificant in comparison to the alienation she felt upon returning to her mother's house where she stayed for the next four years. She writes:

During this time I seemed to hang in the heart of chaos, beyond the touch or voice of human aid. My brother, being almost ten years my senior, did not quite understand my feelings. My mother had never gone inside of a school house and so she was not capable of comforting her daughter who could read and write. Even nature seemed to have no place for me. I was neither a wee girl nor a tall one; neither a wild Indian nor a tame one. This deplorable situation was the effect of my brief course in the East . . .⁵

Headstrong and independent, Gertrude Simmons tried to convince herself and her mother that the bit of education she had received made it impossible for her ever to fit comfortably back into the traditional customs of her tribe. Eventually, too proud to feel guilty about her search for a future, she returned to complete her education at White's and to go on to study two years at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. This was the beginning of a schism with her mother that would only widen over the years, culminating in a bitter contest over her mother's right to a patent in fee for her land allotment.⁶

While at Earlham from 1895 to 1897, Gertrude Simmons distinguishes herself as an orator and poet, publishing essays and highly formal poems in the school's newspaper and winning several debating honors. It is during this period that her literary talents begin to take shape, and as she becomes more and more fluent in English, language becomes the tool for articulating the tension she is to experience throughout her life between her heritage with its imperative of tradition and the inevitable pressure of acculturation. In her early essays, despite

their stiff formality, the pattern of ambivalence is already there, as she alternates between a controlled rage over the mistreatment of Indians and a desire to convince America of the Indian's humanity. Her impulse is toward the cutting edge of truth as she defends the Indian's right to feel revenge in one of her essays:

What if he fought? His forests were felled; his game frightened away; his streams of finny shoals usurped. He loved his family and would defend them. He loved the fair land of which he was rightful owner. He loved the inheritance of his fathers, their traditions, their groves; he held them a priceless legacy to be sacredly kept. He loved his native land. Do you wonder still that in his breast he should brood revenge, when ruthlessly driven from the temples where he worshipped? Do you wonder still that he sulked in forest gloom to avenge the desolation of his home? Is patriotism a virtue only in Saxon hearts? Is there no charity to cover his crouching form as he stealthily opposed his relentless foe?⁷

Yet, ever mindful of her white audience and of her own position between two alien worlds, she consents to the wisdom of learning the "White Man's ways." In the same essay, she writes:

We come from mountain fastnesses, from cheerless plains, from far-off low-wooded streams, seeking the "White Man's ways." Seeking your skill in industry and in art, seeking labor and honest independence, seeking the treasures of knowledge and wisdom, seeking to comprehend the spirit of your laws and the genius of your noble institutions, seeking by a new birthright to unite with yours our claim to a common country, seeking the Sovereign's crown that we may stand side by side with you in ascribing royal honor to our nation's flag. America, I love thee. "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God."

(179)

Zitkala Sa won second place in the Indiana State Oratorical Contest of 1896 for the essay from which these two excerpts were taken. The victory was important to her because she had been humiliated all evening

long by a large white banner bearing a derogatory image of her with the word "squaw" on it. But her triumph was short lived because ever present in the back of her mind was her "mother far away on the Western plains, and she was holding a charge against [her]." Though she would spend her life working for the rights of Indians and would become one of the most vocal spokesmen of the Pan-Indian movement in the '20s and '30s, Zitkala Sa was never reconciled with her mother. She spent her life in balance between two worlds, using the language of one to translate the needs of another. She was in a truly liminal position, always on the threshold of two worlds but never fully entering either.

In 1900, Zitkala Sa published three autobiographical essays in the January, February, and March issues of The Atlantic Monthly: "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians." In December of 1902, The Atlantic Monthly published her essay, "Why I Am a Pagan." During this same period, she published two short stories, "The Trial Path" and "The Soft-Hearted Sioux," respectively in the March and October 1901 issues of Harper's Magazine. "A Warrior's Daughter," another short story, appeared in a 1902 issue of Everybody's Magazine. These essays and stories were later published in 1921 in a collection entitled American Indian Stories by Hayworth Press of Washington, D.C. Old Indian Legends, published by Ginn and Co. of Boston, appeared in 1901. With the exception of some scattered poems and short stories that appeared in various Indian rights magazines, as well as the Carlisle Indian School newspaper, these two books constitute Zitkala Sa's published literary output. Within a brief three-year period, her career as a creative writer blossomed for a moment and then declined.

The decline of her "literary" career coincided directly with her marriage on May 10th, 1902, to Raymond T. Bonnin, also a Sioux with whom she moved to the Uintah and Ouray reservation in Utah where they lived for the next fourteen years and had one son, Raymond O. Bonnin, born in 1903. As the wife of a government employee for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Zitkala Sa became Mrs. Gertrude Bonnin, working in various capacities among the Utah Indians, organizing community activities for the women such as sewing classes and lunch programs, teaching for a period, and even starting a band among the children.

Her creative impulse was not dormant for long, however, and during this period she also collaborated quite intensely with William Hanson on the composition of "Sun Dance," an Indian opera that premiered in 1913 in Vernal, Utah. The opera was so successful among both Indians and whites that it was performed numerous times by the original company and then by Brigham Young University. In 1937, "Sun Dance" was selected by the New York Light Opera Guild as the American Opera for the year and was performed in New York City. Edward Ellsworth Hipsher defines the reason for the success of the opera in American Opera and Its Composers:

The opera does not depict the Indian in the dime novel fashion familiar in the stage and screen. It is a sympathetic portrayal of the real Indian in a conscientious attempt to delineate the manners, the customs, the dress, the religious ideals, the superstitions, the songs, the games, the ceremonials--in short, the life of a noble people too little understood.⁸

Zitkala Sa contributed substantially to the composition of the opera by

telling Hanson the rituals surrounding the Sun Dance in minute detail and sharing with him numerous tales and legends that are woven into the opera's story. She also played tribal songs for him upon her violin which he then transcribed in order to keep both the music and the content of the opera as authentic as possible.

In a letter dated 2 September, 1915, the Special Supervisor of the Uintah and Ouray School writes to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

I do not think it will be amiss for me to inform you that if any person should wish to know anything about Indian music, they could not do better than to write to Mrs. Gertrude Bonnin . . . Mrs. Bonnin, who is half Sioux Indian, studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and is considered very proficient. She has given considerable attention to Indian music through the interest she has in her people.⁹

That she loved music and continued to entertain Indian friends at soirees in her home with her accomplishments as a violinist and a singer is further corroborated by Billie Lyons, an aging Mohawk lady, who recalls many such evenings in Washington, D.C. in the second decade of the century.¹⁰

By 1916, the Bonnins had, indeed, moved to Washington permanently as Gertrude had been elected secretary of the Society of the American Indian, the organization with whom she had corresponded since its inception at Ohio State University in 1911. Founded and governed exclusively by Indians, the SAI provided a collective forum for Indians who sought to redress the multitude of inequities they had suffered. Under the auspices of the SAI, Bonnin launched her life's work in Indian reform, lecturing and campaigning across the country for Indian citizenship, employment of Indians in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, equitable settlement of tribal land claims, and stabilization of laws relating to Indians. Her temporary post as editor from 1918-1919 of

the Society's publication, The American Indian Magazine, gave her the opportunity to reach an even wider audience in print and her editorials ranged from reports on annual meetings to testimonies to the loyal patriotism of American Indians who had volunteered to fight for America in World War I.¹¹

In 1920 the SAI dissolved, and the Bonnins turned their energies to other arenas. Raymond Bonnin, who had become Captain Bonnin during his military service in World War I, took courses in law for four years and then went to work in 1925 as a law clerk in the Washington branch of Munn, Anderson, and Munn. In the meantime, Gertrude concentrated her efforts in work with the General Federation of Women's Clubs, convincing the Federation to establish an Indian Welfare Committee in 1921. In her history of the Federation, Mildred White Wells describes Bonnin's reaction at the moment the committee was approved at the national meeting in Salt Lake City: "Tears rolled down the cheeks of the Indian woman as she cried, 'It has begun. Nothing now can stop it. We shall have help.'"¹² With the support of the Federation, Bonnin continued her reform work, ever pressing for Indian citizenship, as well as for improvements in education and health care and the preservation of Indian culture. One concrete result of the collective efforts of Bonnin and the Federation was an investigation into government treatment of certain Oklahoman tribes which led to the formation of the Meriam Commission and the subsequent appointment by President Hoover in 1928 of members of the Indian Rights Association to the top two positions in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The results of the Oklahoma investigation in which Bonnin participated were published in 1924 in a monograph entitled Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the

Five Civilized Tribes--Legalized Robbery.¹³ That same year, American Indians were finally granted U.S. citizenship.

Her apprenticeship at an end, Gertrude Bonnin was fully prepared, then, in 1926 to found her own political organization, the National Council of American Indians, of which she was the single president until her death in 1938. The organization, as described in Indian Truth, was designed to "create increased interest in behalf of the Indians, and secure for them added recognition of their personal and property rights."¹⁴ And in The Indian's Friend, it was termed a "non-partisan, non-sectarian organization carrying on an Information Service for untrained Indian citizen voters and helping them to organize themselves in assemblies for discussion."¹⁵

Here was the perfect opportunity for a woman who had suffered intensely her alienation from her own family and who yet disdained to curry favor from the white world. Armed with her oratorical skills, learned--not without pain--twenty years earlier and refined through her work with the SAI and the Federation, and her literary ability, she would work as an independent reformer on behalf of suppressed Indians across the country and represent their problems, with the help of legal advice from her husband, to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in whose world she now moved with familiar ease. She became known to Indians and government officials alike as a persuasive public speaker and an effective, if relentless, mediator. She had, at last, found the way to use her education and skills of expression to aid her people, not to be an object of suspicion to them, and in doing so, she became the champion of the underdog Indian and a scourge to irresponsible Indian agents.

In the National Archives, Record Group No. 75 contains the Central

Files for 1907-1939 of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, within which are literally hundreds of pages of correspondence from and about Gertrude Bonnin. Without question, the Bonnins' motives were not always altruistic as they did earn their living through the legal advice they rendered, and they did campaign among Indians aggressively for the issues and candidates they believed in. More often than not, though, their angriest critics were inept or corrupt Indian agents and their staunchest supporters those reservation Indians whose lives had been demoralized by poverty and neglect and who had thought it impossible that their voices would ever be heard.

Controversial to the end, Gertrude Bonnin remained an enigma--a curious blend of civilized romanticism and aggressive individualism. To many traditional Indians, she was somewhat suspect because she took bits and pieces from various tribes where it suited her, as exemplified in the eclectic dress she wore for public speeches which combined Sioux beadwork with Navajo silver. To whites, she was irritating because she was efficient and unpredictable. By the end of her career, she was calling for the abolishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, though that institution had employed her and her husband at various times for years. She often ridiculed the blind adherence of Indians to outmoded traditions of a past era; yet, at other times, she would vociferously defend their right to retain and preserve their culture. Estranged throughout her life from her own family, she yet returned to Yankton on frequent visits to take back to Washington artifacts of her tribe, special recipes, and various foodstuffs. Her own image of herself eventually evolved into an admixture of myth and fact, so that by the time of her death in 1938, she believed, and it was erroneously stated

in three obituaries, that she was the granddaughter of Sitting Bull, though the Yankton tribal rolls indicate that her own mother was older than Sitting Bull.¹⁶

In one biographical sketch, Bonnin is described thusly:

The literature of Indian reform gives much attention to the maladjustments suffered by white-educated Indians who returned to their own people. Less well known is the role of these educated Indians in pressing for "progressive" reforms both on and off the reservation. Gertrude Simmons Bonnin was an Indian progressive; her career indicates both the achievements and frustrations attendant upon that role.¹⁷

Her career also exemplifies the tremendous difficulty confronting minority people who would become writers but who are constantly under pressure from their own groups to use literature toward socio-political ends. For American Indian writers, this dilemma has been further compounded by the heritage of an oral tradition that has its own aesthetic imperatives. It is not surprising at all that Zitkala Sa subsumed her creative energy into a life work of progressive reform for Indians. The wonder is that she wrote at all and in so doing became one of the first Indians to bring to the attention of a white audience the traditions of a tribe as well as the personal sensibilities of one of its members. It would be false to say that Zitkala Sa launched an American Indian literary tradition, but it is possible, in examining the cameo of her life and literature, to say that she struggled toward a vision of wholeness in which the conflicting parts of her existence could be reconciled. That she did not fully succeed is evident in her work, which is a model of ambivalences, of oscillations between two diametrically opposed worlds, but is also a model of retrieved possibilities, a creative, human endeavor that stands at the beginning of

many such endeavors eventually to culminate in the finely crafted work of contemporary American Indian writers.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

A.

THE EVOLUTION OF A WRITER

¹Carlos Montezuma was a Yavapai who became quite famous as one of the first Indians to become a doctor. Based in Chicago, he was a national spokesman for Indian rights throughout his life. He and Zitkala Sa were engaged to be married for a brief period and exchanged numerous letters which have been included in the Carlos Montezuma papers presently in the Division of Archives and Manuscripts of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The correspondence quoted here is taken from Microfilm 151, Reel #1, of the Carlos Montezuma Papers. John W. Lerner, Jr. is currently editing the papers of Carlos Montezuma and may be contacted c/o Klein Independent School District, Spring, Texas 77379.

²The family history of Ellen Simmons's three marriages and her subsequent return to the Yankton Agency may be found in Record #10-1622-09--Yankton 312 of Record Group No. 75, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Record Group No. 75 contains the Central Files for 1907-1939 of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and will be referred to several times in this paper.

Other biographical information on Zitkala Sa exists in several places under her married name, Gertrude Bonnin: Who's Who in the Nation's Capital, ed. Stanley H. Williamson (Washington, D.C.: Ransdell, Inc., 1927/1934/1935); Marion Gridley, American Indian Women (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1974). Gridley, however, is inaccurate on the date of birth of Zitkala Sa and several details of her education. Great North American Indians--Profiles in Life and Leadership, ed. Frederick J. Dockstader (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1977). Dockstader falsely claims that Zitkala Sa's father was John Haysting Simmons who had died long before Ellen Simmons married her third husband. Indians of Today, ed. Marion E. Gridley (Crawfordsville, Indiana: The Lakeside Press, 1936). The best brief account of Zitkala Sa's life may be found in Notable American Women--1607-1950--A Biographical Dictionary, ed. Edward T. James (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).

Zitkala Sa is listed as Gertie Simmons Bonnin, #209, on the Indian Census Roll taken in 1930 at the Yankton Reservation. According to that Census, she would have been born in 1873, was only one quarter Sioux, and was eight years older than her husband, Raymond T. Bonnin. The latter may be true, but the rest of my research, including the headstone on her grave at Arlington Cemetery, indicates that she was born in 1876 and was one half Sioux because her mother was a full blood and her father was white. Her ID number for allotment, annuity and identification is AL-594-609.

³For information on Sioux names, see Royal B. Hassrick, The Sioux--Life and Customs of a Warrior Society (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1964).

⁴New York: Dover Publications, 1971. This is an unabridged republication of the work originally published by McClure, Phillips, and Co. in 1902.

⁵"The School Days of an Indian Girl" in American Indian Stories (Glorieta, New Mexico: Rio Grande Press, 1976; reprint of the 1921 edition published by Hayworth Publishing House, Washington, D.C.), p. 69. Subsequent references will be taken from this edition. This particular autobiographical essay first appeared in the February 1900 issue of The Atlantic Monthly.

⁶For further information on the dispute between Zitkala Sa and her mother, see the following files in Record Group No. 75 at the National Archives: 10 1622-09, 1966-10, 1995-10, 2637-10, 3212-10, 9008-10, 7783-10, 41629-10, Yankton Agency. Apparently, when Ellen Simmons applied for a patent in fee, she had the full support of her son by her first marriage, Peter St. Pierre. David Simmons, a half brother, and Zitkala Sa protested the sale of the land because, according to the Superintendent of the Agency, they would receive none of the profits from the sale. Various tribesmen, as well as BIA officials, were called in to testify on the character of the individuals concerned. It is clear from reading all the documents that the conflict was a classic case of the old order versus the new, reservation Indians imbued with tradition versus non-reservation Indians committed to reform.

⁷"Side by Side," The Earlhamite, II (March 16, 1896), 178.

⁸Philadelphia: Theo. Presser Co., 1927, p. 247. All of the information on the opera itself, including reviews, the story, performances, cast, etc., may be found in the papers of William Hanson, MSS 299, Brigham Young University.

⁹This may be found in Record #101258-1915-751 of Record Group No. 75, National Archives.

¹⁰In July 1978, I conducted an interview with Ms. Lyons in Washington, D.C. She had been very active in Washington's Indian community for years and knew the Bonnins personally. Her view of Gertrude Bonnin was exceptionally positive and quite the opposite of some of the images revealed in the files of the BIA.

¹¹For an excellent history of the Pan Indian movement and the activities of the Society of American Indians, see Hazel Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity--Modern Pan Indian Movements (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1971).

¹²Unity in Diversity--The History of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (Washington, D.C.: Gen. Fed. of Women's Clubs, 1953), p. 217.

¹³A report by Gertrude Bonnin, Charles H. Fabens, Matthew K. Sniffen (Philadelphia: Office of the Indian Rights Association, 1924; Indian Rights Association Publication, 2nd Series, #127).

¹⁴Vol. 3, No. 3 (March, 1926), 3.

¹⁵Vol. XLI, No. 4 (July, 1929), 7.

¹⁶The New York Times, The Washington Daily News and the Washington Star all listed Bonnin as the granddaughter of Sitting Bull. Bonnin died on 26 January 1938; services were held for her at the Church of the Latter Day Saints, and she was buried in Arlington Cemetery. According to Frank A. Lockwood, Superintendent of Arlington, "Captain Bonnin and his wife became eligible for burial in a national cemetery by virtue of his honorable service in the U.S. Army during World War I. The current restrictions on burials in Arlington National Cemetery became effective on 17 February 1967." [This information was taken from a letter dated 11 October 1972 to Omer C. Stewart, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Colorado.] Bonnin's tombstone reads: "Gertrude Simmons Bonnin--'Zitkala Sa' of the Sioux Indians--1876-1938."

¹⁷Notable American Women - 1607-1950 - A Biographical Dictionary, ed. Edward T. James (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1971), p. 200.

B.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

In Then Badger Said This (New York: Vantage Press, 1977), Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, a contemporary Sioux writer, relates the following story from Sioux oral culture:

Swan was a young Sioux boy who liked to study tracks and signs and other things a warrior must know to become famous as a scout in his tribe. His interests became known to the headman who then asked him to scout the location of an enemy and bring back news of their strength both in horses and warriors.

Swan traveled without stopping for food and he watched every sign in the air, on the ground and in the bushes and trees. At nightfall he was very tired and so he set his tipi and started to prepare his arrows for whatever might befall him in enemy country.

Sitting by his fire, Swan carefully ground the edges of an arrow between two flat stones to make the point sharper. He was so intent upon his work that when an owl in the tree over his tent softly spoke, "who-o-o, whooo-oo-o," it seemed so close that he was startled and he dropped his arrow. As he bent over to pick up the arrow, his eyes rested on the surface of a bowl of water he had placed near his fire when he was getting his evening meal. He saw reflected in the water the face of an enemy looking down at him through the smokehole in the top of his tipi.

Showing no sign of having heard the owl nor of having seen the enemy face, Swan continued to sharpen his bow, turning this way and that, sighting its accuracy. Then with a quick twist of the wrist, he shot an arrow straight up through the face looking down at him. The enemy scout fell over dead.

(33-34)

The purpose of this story is to emphasize the importance of sound to Sioux culture. For a nomadic culture constantly vulnerable to both

natural and man-made hostilities, the ability to hear and distinguish the complex sounds of one's environment--as Swan "hears" when the owl "speaks" to him--is crucial to preservation. Indeed, in the 15th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology of 1893-94, W. J. McGee asserts that the development of the Siouan languages "reflects the needs and records the history of the hunter and warrior tribes, whose phonetic symbols were necessarily so differentiated as to be intelligible in whisper, oratory, and war cry, as well as in ordinary converse, while the complex structure is in harmony with the elaborate social organization and ritual of the Siouan people."¹ On the Plains, the Sioux were attuned to every subtle modulation of sound in each corner of the space they inhabited.

Not only does physical survival depend upon sound, as well as on the other senses, but tradition is ensured by the repetition of those oral tales that convey the tenets of culture. Swan's story will be told over and over again until it is permanently recorded in the oral tradition. Culture is protected and perpetuated when its history is heard and repeated orally through chants, songs, and stories. In her comment upon Swan's story, Cook-Lynn says, "The response to sound is evident in all Sioux art forms, and in historical recitation it is profound and complete" (34).

In the autobiographical sketches of Zitkala Sa, sound becomes a symbol of all that is alien and foreign in the white environment of the school. For example, when she first arrives at White's Manual Institute at age eight to begin her education, she is visibly jarred by the

large bell [that] rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying

clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an under-current of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.²

Language especially is a constant reminder of her alien environment as she remains "deaf to the English language" and must learn through the ears of her friends. When she and two companions are chastized for playing in the snow, she recalls what she heard:

The paleface woman talked in very severe tones. Her words fell from her lips like crackling embers, and her inflection ran up like the small end of a switch. I understood her voice better than the things she was saying.

(58)

Even the "iron routine" of the school's daily schedule takes on a "buzzing" that is a constant irritant to Zitkala Sa who has been trained to "suffer in silence rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose eyes could not see [her] pain" (66).

In contrast to the audible harshness of her environment, Zitkala Sa describes her own reactions in muted tones:

These sad memories rise above those of smoothly grinding school days. Perhaps, my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs them now for their present record. But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it.

(67-68)

Zitkala Sa's voice would become louder and stronger in her later years as an Indian reformer, but in 1900 when these sketches were first published, she was chafing from the public criticism of some of her colleagues, who deeply resented her descriptions in "The School Days of an Indian Girl." At one point, she replies to her critics in the April

1900 issue of The Red Man and Helper:

I give outright the varying moods of my own evolution; those growing pains which knew not reason while active. To stir up views and earnest comparison of theories was one of the ways in which I hoped it would work a benefit to my people. No one can dispute my own impressions and bitterness. Perhaps a reason may be assigned to them--that I have left my friends to do.

That Zitkala Sa should provoke reactions of outrage from assimilationists because of her honest and often negative descriptions of off-reservation schools and her own experience as an educated Indian is not surprising, because she was one of the first Native American women to present such a point of view. Given the history of autobiographies by Native American women, it is somewhat astounding to realize that Zitkala Sa was, perhaps, the first Indian woman to write her own story without the aid of an editor, an interpreter, or an ethnographer.

The majority of autobiographies by Native American women during the first three decades of the twentieth century cannot be properly called autobiographies at all. They are life stories told to an ethnographer through the aid of an interpreter. Because the woman usually answers questions posed by the ethnologist, she does not select the material she tells, though she might be selective in her answer. From the ethnologist's point of view, a given life story is interesting only insofar as it illuminates the customs and beliefs of a tribal community.³ Little attempt, if any, is made to present fully the sensibilities or the individuality of the female informant. Rather, the stories are recorded to prevent the disappearance of knowledge of manners and customs from a bygone era. Some examples of early ethnographic autobiographies include Truman Michelson's three works: Autobiography of a

Fox Indian Woman (1918-1919), Narrative of an Arapaho Woman (1933), and Narrative of a Southern Cheyenne Woman (1932). In 1921, Gilbert Wilson published Waheenee, An Indian Girl's Story and Ruth Underhill edited The Autobiography of a Papago Woman in 1936. Even Sarah Winne-mucca Hopkins' Life Among the Piute: Their Wrongs and Claims (1883) was edited by Mrs. Horace Mann. Organized to cover the major events in a woman's life from early childhood through puberty ceremonies and education to marriage and childrearing, these autobiographies focus on the woman's role in tribal communities and are certainly valuable for the information they do present.

But strikingly different is Zitkala Sa who writes on her own what it is like to live divided between tradition and assimilation. The episodes she selects to highlight are of her own choosing, and her presentation of them, however unsophisticated that might be, reflects her particular sensibility. She is not reaffirming the role of the woman in tribal life, though she does give a great deal of information about that role through her description of her mother's life and traditions. Nor is her purpose to praise the educational opportunities afforded her through government policies. Rather, she presents carefully and, at times, sentimentally, the pain and difficulty of growing up Indian in a white man's world. She is not showcasing her life as yet another artifact to be preserved, but rather she is revealing a personality and identity that is uniquely hers. Her autobiographical sketches, which consist of seven chapters in "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," seven chapters in "The School Days of an Indian Girl," and four chapters in "An Indian Teacher Among Indians," are, perhaps, more properly termed impressions--which is how she does title the first one.

It is interesting to note as well that she later collects these sketches under the title of American Indian Stories. Certainly, the temporal and spatial referents are vague, and her recollections do not always coincide with the "facts." She changes the name of her brother and in other ways romanticizes her experience. Yet, her voice, for all its ambivalence, is her own.

One brief example from her early school days at White's illustrates the tone of these sketches:

But this eating by formula was not the hardest trial in that first day. Later in the morning, my friend Judéwin gave me a terrible warning. Judéwin knew a few words of English; and she had overheard the pale-face woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards . . . I watched my chance, and when no one noticed I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes,--my mocassins had been exchanged for shoes . . . Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. . . . On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and cuddled myself in the dark corner. From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by . . . I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast to a chair. I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

(54-56)

Here was a voice that had not been heard before, though it would stand as the first of several such personal autobiographical statements.

Charles Eastman, also a Sioux, was to be the most prolific of the early Native American writers, though even his works were heavily edited and sometimes even rewritten by his white wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman, an accomplished poet. Eastman's first autobiography appears in 1902 and is entitled Indian Boyhood.⁴ Unlike Zitkala Sa, Eastman concentrates almost exclusively upon the traditions of his tribe and his own personal childhood experiences before he leaves the tribe to seek his education. Perhaps, a major difference between the two writers is that Eastman remained with the Sioux until he was fifteen, whereas Zitkala Sa was taken from her home at age eight. Eastman expands his recollections to include legends that his Indian grandmother told him as well as to detail the various aspects of his own training as a young warrior.

As a trained physician, Eastman attracted a wide audience of readers curious to know more about this "educated Indian," and the result was a string of books that were published over a twenty-year period: Red Hunters and the Animal People (1904), Old Indian Days (1907), Wigwam Evenings: Sioux Folk Tales Retold (1909), The Soul of an Indian (1911), From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian (1916), Smoky Day's Wigwam Evenings: Indian Stories Retold (1924), and Indian Child Life (1926).

Zitkala Sa and Eastman were to cross over each other's tracks for years. She published her first autobiographical sketches in 1900, his appeared in 1902. Her series of Old Indian Legends came out in 1901, his first collection in 1904. She taught at Carlisle Indian School from 1898-99; Eastman went there three years later. And, finally, when Zitkala Sa became secretary of the Society of the American Indian in 1916, Eastman was elected president shortly thereafter. Though Zitkala

Sa and Eastman crossed paths often, they represented two divergent choices that educated Indians could make and they expressed those choices in their literature--Zitkala Sa was the reformer, the protestor, the one who refused to convert to Christianity or yield totally to assimilationist politics; her literature, particularly the autobiographical sketches, is remarkable because of the tone of militancy that runs throughout. Her voice stands out all the more because she is writing early when other Indians, such as Eastman, were expressing themselves much more passively. A converted Christian, Eastman tended to look upon his early background as exotic and to count the blessings afforded him by "civilization."

In the personal narratives of her early childhood and school days, Zitkala Sa contrasts the pastoral images of her idyllic childhood in the wild and open nature with the confining and mechanistic regimen of the school. Though the theme of the "evil paleface" is introduced in the first chapter by her mother who recalls their forced odyssey to new lands and the subsequent death of her brother and daughter, the focus is on the simple and joyful routines of their daily life. Within the tribal circle, there is warmth and hospitality, a sharing of humor and traditions. Like "little sportive nymphs on that Dakota sea of rolling green," Zitkala Sa and her friends run wild all day long, discovering the secrets of nature's bounty, impersonating their elders, practicing bead work, chasing their shadows, and, at night, falling asleep over the legends.

But the idyllic freedom is short-lived and "the first turning away from the easy, natural flow of life occurred in an early spring," when the missionaries came to the village to encourage the education of the

young. In a particularly poignant passage, Zitkala Sa describes her mother's feelings:

. . . my daughter, though she does not understand what it all means, is anxious to go. She will need an education when she is grown, for then there will be fewer real Dakotas, and many more palefaces. This tearing her away, so young, from her mother is necessary, if I would have her an educated woman. The palefaces, who owe us a large debt for stolen lands, have begun to pay a tardy justice in offering some education to our children. But I know my daughter must suffer keenly in this experiment.

(44)

And suffer she does as she exchanges her freedom for "civilization" and likens herself to an animal being domesticated. Indeed, animal imagery permeates her initial impressions of the world outside her village. Riding on the "iron horse" across the Missouri, she feels as "frightened and bewildered as the captured young of a wild creature." When her long hair is shorn, she is like "one of many little animals driven by a herder." And as she tries to adjust to the rigid routine of the boarding school, she trudges in "the day's harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute."

But though her two worlds appear to stand in sharp opposition to each other, Zitkala Sa cannot choose between them, revealing an undercurrent of confusion that continually informs her point of view. She recalls her early suspicion of Indians with tattoo marks on their faces, though such marks were commonplace among traditional Sioux who believed they guaranteed safe passage to the spirit trail after death.⁵ On the other hand, she criticizes those educated Indians who return to the reservation and continue to wear the white man's clothes and speak English. When she returns to school against her mother's wishes, she takes along a "tiny bunch of magic roots" which will bring her friends

wherever she goes, but the "little buckskin bag containing all [her] good luck" is soon lost.

In the third section of her autobiographical impressions, Zitkala Sa gropes toward a partial resolution of her internal conflict, as she determines to spend her "energies in a work for the Indian race" and plans to teach in an "Eastern Indian school." But even this vocation soon turns sour, as she discovers the ineptitudes of her colleagues and the propagandizing aspirations of the school's administrators. Suddenly realizing what her education has cost her, she writes:

For the white man's papers I had given up my faith in the Great Spirit. For these same papers I had forgotten the healing in trees and brooks. On account of my mother's simple view of life, and my lack of any, I gave her up also. I made no friends among the race of people I loathed. Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature and God . . . Now a cold bare pole I seemed to be, planted in a strange earth.

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Disillusioned by the empty charity of Indian schools, she ends with the question of whether "real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization."

In many ways, these personal narratives are very much within the tradition of both the bildungsroman and the sentimental novel. Certainly, she is a young woman on a journey in quest of an education and self knowledge. Her depiction of various scenes is over romanticized and sometimes even maudlin. She feels herself quite alone in the world and fails even to feel satisfaction from her clear accomplishments. In almost a Byronic fashion, she continually spurns the friendship offered her first by her classmates after her victory at the oratorical contest and later during her days as a teacher. Her return to the reservation offers no solace; indeed, it serves but to isolate her further. With a

few adjustments, her story could be expanded into a full blown plot for a successful sentimental novel.

In many ways, these autobiographical sketches serve as emblems of the experience of many Indians living in transition between two worlds. Space and time referents are non-specific. Zitkala Sa exists in self-created space. She is not geographically precise about the reservation, her early boarding school in "Red Apple Country," or the place where she later teaches, "a quaint little village." What is precise, and consistently so, is that she is going East and her mother lives West. These two directions circumscribe the landscape of her being and become recurrent symbols of her internal uncertainty. The East represents civilization, confinement, noise, regime. The West is freedom, nature, space, community. Within Sioux culture, the West is the place of visions, self knowledge, initiation, change. But in going East for her education, Zitkala Sa has inverted the normal order of things in her world, and she hangs suspended, trying to transform internal chaos into ordered being. In constant motion between two worlds, she challenges the assumptions of those who would be complacent about their efforts on behalf of the Indians, and, by contrast, illuminates the integrity of the little-known Indian world. Her exploration is into the space between the two worlds and the constant question she holds before us is whether or not one can exist there.

There seems to be no middle ground, but it is the middle ground that she eventually must inhabit and that she explores in subject matter and imagery. She compares herself at one point to the "petrified Indian woman" of her mother's tales who is the abandoned maiden of the Standing Rock legend. In another instance, she is a "slender tree . . . uprooted

. . . a cold bare pole . . . planted in a strange earth" which is an ironic twist on the sacred willow tree selected by the purest maidens of the tribe to be used in the religious Sun Dance. She recalls the Iktomi tales of her childhood and mourns the loss of her hair as if she has been shamed in a way she doesn't understand. And she contrasts the Great Spirit in his myriad natural forms to the horror of the white man's devil.

Finally, as we have already seen, she charts her progress into the white man's world through her response to the sounds of her environment. One survives through hearing and passing on orally the group's collective history. What has changed is that Zitkala Sa is narrating her own history, and in doing so, her preoccupation with sound becomes the metaphor of her struggle to find her own voice.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

B.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

¹"The Siouan Indians--A Preliminary Sketch," pp. 157-204.

²American Indian Stories (Glorieta, New Mexico: Rio Grande Press, 1976; reprint of the 1921 edition, published by Hayworth Publishing House, Washington), p. 52. All subsequent references will be to this edition.

³Much of the information on autobiography is taken from a paper entitled "Transformation of Tradition: Autobiographical Works by Native American Women," delivered by Gretchen Bataille of Iowa State University at the 1978 MLA Convention.

⁴Published by McClure, Phillips & Company.

⁵According to many accounts as explained by Royal B. Hassrick, "At death, it was believed that the spirit or "nagi" left the body to travel the "Spirit Trail" or Milky Way to the "Land of Many Lodges." In making this journey, some believed, the spirit had to pass an old woman who would examine each one for the proper tattoo marks which must appear on the wrist or forehead or chin. If the old woman--Hihankara, the Owl Maker--could not find the proper marks, she would push the ghost from the trail, and it would fall to earth. Such spirits would become ghosts and wander about the earth forever." The Sioux--Life and Customs of a Warrior Society (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 337-338.

⁶p. 73.

C.

LEGENDS - THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION

1. "Iktomi and the Ducks"

Among the Sioux, stories are divided into two categories: first there are the ohunkakan which are narratives of incredible events and mythic characters of a pre-historic era designed primarily to entertain. The Yankton word for myth is Ohu'kaka from hahepi (night) and kaka (laughable).¹ Thus, the ohunkakan stories, which may be compared in some ways to European folk tales, are to be told only at night for the purpose of entertainment. They usually end with the conventional phrase, hehayela (that is all), or owl'hake'e (that is the end).² Trickster tales and culture-hero tales are two major types of ohunkakan.

The second type of tale is the wicooyake narrative which is regarded as "true" and includes legends and stories of historical events, although supernatural figures may intervene at times.³ The ending for these stories is sk'a (it is said) which is used for mythic material; and ke'ya'pi (they say) which usually occurs at the end of legendary and historical tales about the tribe.⁴

Of the ohunkakan, the Iktomi stories or trickster tales are one of the most popular and constitute eight of the fourteen tales in Zitkala Sa's Old Indian Legends. Martha Beckwith has called the Iktomi tales the "lying" stories because Iktomi is "the father of lies; one who tells lies is subject to his trickery."⁵ Always looking for a way to get the best of every situation but usually failing, Iktomi is generally visual-

ized in the guise of a man, though he has the power of transformation and may also appear at times as a coyote in a tale exclusively about animals. Most often, however, he appears as a man even to the animals. The name Iktomi also means spider, of which Ella Deloria, a well-known Sioux anthropologist, says, "The only relation I have found is in a story of spiders coming out of the ashes of the dead Iktomi."⁶ But according to Martha Beckwith, there is a definite connection between Iktomi and the spider which is expressed in folklore about the spider.⁷ Certainly, the comparison of Iktomi to a spider works on a metaphorical level because Iktomi tries to weave his web of cunning around others, though he often is not subtle enough to beguile his victim for long. In fact, his major characteristic seems to be a shameless greed that he tries to perpetuate through posturing and insincerity. His behavior is consistently immoral and anti-social in that he delights, in some stories, for example, in breaking the kinship laws.

In 1889, J. Owen Dorsey noted that the Teton Sioux regarded Iktomi as "the first being who attained maturity in this world. He is more cunning than human beings. He named all people and animals, and he was the first to use human speech."⁸ Ella Deloria supports this view of Iktomi as well, though she does state at one point that Iktomi uses "the barest skeleton of speech." He reduces all experience to its most elemental form, including language. The word does have the power to transform chaos into ordered experience, and ultimately, the Iktomi stories are about transformation--the transformation of disorder into order, lack into not lack, words into communication.

As with all trickster cycles, the Iktomi tales give vent to those impulses the Sioux had to repress in order to maintain the social order.

As Elaine Jahner has pointed out in discussing ohunkakan in general, "These stories elevate the problematic dimensions of the culture to an imaginary level and help listeners internalize the cultural mechanisms of adjustment to society's strains and frustrations."⁹ For example, fasting was a way of life for the Sioux to the point that it became an important part of the ritual connected with the vision quest, as well as the cleansing processes required before major battles or decision-making councils. But fasting was also a grim reality of a nomadic way of life in which food was not guaranteed. Trained to endure long periods of time without food, the Sioux conquered their fear of deprivation by incorporating self-denial into their world view and their tales. Many of the Iktomi stories are about hunger and his greed in hoarding whatever food he does manage to trick away from someone. Usually, though, Iktomi loses the food at the last minute because of his greed. Which is the point. The Sioux social order could not have survived had there been an individualistic approach to food gathering or an impulse to undisciplined self-gratification. All food captured in the hunt had to be shared communally, though the hunter would be rewarded by having first choice of select pieces.

Similarly, a highly structured social organization replete with kinship laws based upon familiarity and avoidance had to be observed in order to establish the lines of authority and promote harmony within the basic family unit and the larger tiyospaye or band. Because of the avoidance taboo, sons, for example, could not look at or directly address their mothers-in-law or vice versa; the same applied for daughters and fathers-in-law, which allowed the cohesiveness of the family to be maintained within an enormously extended family context. Other kinship

laws between brothers, sisters, and cousins served to prevent possible incestuous or libertine sexual alliances from occurring which would threaten the social order.¹⁰ Because of the complexity of living in such a formally organized manner, the Sioux found in their tales a safety valve of humor. One of the most famous Iktomi stories involves his taking his mother-in-law off to war with him--impossible in the "real" world but certainly a great source of delight and relieved humor to those listening to the story. But besides their value as humorous outlets, such tales also function as emblems of moral behavior. This paradox is common to all folklore which, as William Bascom notes, "plays a vital role in transmitting and maintaining the institutions of a culture and in forcing the individual to conform to them, at the same time it provides socially approved outlets for the repressions which these same institutions impose upon him."¹¹

A second type of ohunkakan is the culture-hero narrative which focuses on the actions of a hero who seeks to become an integral part of the tribal unit. Elaine Jahner describes the pattern:

The hero always begins by living outside the camp circle. He always achieves his final position within the group by undertaking a journey to the west which involves daring to face various dangers. During his journeys he enters another band's camp circle, takes from them either a wife or a close friend and then returns home where he lives in a definite position of prestige within his own camp circle.

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In Old Indian Legends, three of the stories are about the culture hero, Blood-Clot Boy, and two more contain definite motifs from the pattern of culture hero narratives.

What is interesting are the parallels between the trickster tales

and the culture-hero tales. Both are liminal characters, standing on the threshold of the community between order and chaos. Both kinds of tales involve movement, random and ordered. Iktomi tales usually begin with the statement, "Iktomi was traveling along" but his space is an undefined one and his movements are often without thought or direction. His actions depend solely upon what his environment presents to him, which is usually why he gets into trouble because there is no plan to his movement. In contrast, the culture hero also travels but his is a specific journey to the west--the place of the Thunderbirds, symbolizing trial, initiation, and change--and while he must also confront unknown obstacles along the way, there is purpose to his movement. Even so, he is often outwitted on his journey by the trickster, which is a reminder that virtue does not necessarily recognize or vanquish deception.

Clearly, these two types of ohunkakan are pedagogical, presenting alternative approaches to life. Both take into account the unknown dangers of the world outside the tiyospaye--perhaps a reflection ultimately of the Sioux's own constant state of liminality with reference to the greater universe--and both offer lessons in survival. For a nomadic tribe for whom "movement itself is the primal image for life," the ohunkakan explore every aspect of random and ordered movement.

Despite their pedagogical nature, however, the explanatory elements in the ohunkakan, the counterpart to the morals of European fables, occur in only about fifty percent of the tales, and where they do occur, they are of secondary importance because the primary motivation for a story is the telling of it.¹² According to Raymond DeMallie, "The Sioux seem not to have needed any morals to justify the stories; they told them and still tell them just for fun--everyone, even the teller,

laughs."¹³ The explanations that do exist lie in the transformations inherent in the story and in the dynamic between the tellers and their audience. Certainly, it is as much in the telling of a story as in its content that entertainment resides, and after hearing the same story many times, a Sioux audience would look forward to enjoying the individual stylistic embellishments of the oral performance.

It is this dimension of oral style that is so difficult to locate within the literary mode. In her preface to Old Indian Legends, Zitkala Sa comments upon the problem:

. . . In both Dakotas, North and South, I have often listened to the same story told over again by a new storyteller. While I recognized such a legend without the least difficulty, I found the renderings varying much in little incidents. Generally one helped the other in restoring some lost link in the original character of the tales. Now I have tried to transplant the native spirit of these tales--root and all--into the English language, since America in the last few centuries has acquired a second tongue.¹⁴

Transplant is a curiously accurate term in this context: to take from one environment and place in another; to preserve that which is vital in a new art form, and for those writers witnessing the transition from one way of life to another, this was the ultimate challenge.

Zitkala Sa, for example, published Old Indian Legends just a decade after the Massacre at Wounded Knee, the tragedy that sounded the death knell to the great warrior nation of the Plains. It is impossible to imagine the anguish the Sioux must have felt to live through the end of their history, to see the old order irrevocably changed, the circle broken. Without the context of the community to support the relationship between storytelling and life, the oral tradition itself was threatened as the old tales lost some of their vitality and resonance.

For a time, it seemed that art had become permanently dislocated from life. Yet, as Irving Howe has remarked, "a subculture finds its voice and its passion at exactly the moment it approaches disintegration,"¹⁵ and in the retelling of the ohunkakan, Zitkala Sa creates a new space in which to reaffirm the cultural memory of her tribe. As the literary counterpart of the oral storytellers of her tribe, she is faced with the challenge of making her material accessible to a white audience without distorting it from the original and, at the same time, of finding room for her own voice because she is, after all, also a storyteller.

In order to understand more fully the process of "transplanting" the oral tradition into literary form, I have divided the following discussion of Old Indian Legends into two parts. The first section is a textual analysis of an Iktomi story in comparison with an oral version of the same tale recorded by a Sioux anthropologist. A discussion of the culture-hero tale, "Blood-Clot Boy," follows in the second part.

The anthropological version of the story, "Iktomi Tricks the Pheasants," is taken from Dakota Texts published by Ella Deloria in 1932. I have selected this version to work from because Ella Deloria was herself a Yankton Sioux as well as an anthropologist and the work she did among the Sioux under the tutelage of Franz Boas is still considered definitive. Her method was to record verbatim a given story in Dakota or Lakota and then to give two translations, literal and free. She has footnoted a number of words and customs throughout the text which is divided into sections, the first including ohunkakan and the second legends and histories. The version of the story included here is the free translation.

Zitkala Sa's story entitled "Iktomi and the Ducks" immediately follows Deloria's. This particular story of Iktomi is very popular

among many Indian tribes, especially the Plains Indians, so variants of the story abound.¹⁶ In Appendix A, I have included a variant entitled "Spider and Coyote" collected by Clark Wissler and published in 1907 and a contemporary version of the tale published by James LaPointe in 1976. While the textual analysis here will concentrate only on a comparison between Zitkala Sa and Deloria, the ideal would be to study as many variants of a tale as possible in order to determine, as Paul Radin suggests, what the raconteur-author considers to be the difference between "folklore-mythology" and literature.

The two texts follow:

Iktomi Tricks the Pheasants

Free Translation¹⁷

1. Iktomi was walking at random along a creek and he heard dancing, so he stopped to listen. 2. He finally located the source of the sound; so he went towards it and stood within sight of the place; and saw that those were all pheasants who were dancing and having a jolly time. 3. Immediately he withdrew into the wood and wrapped some red grass about a piece of wood; this he put on his back, and then walked past without paying the slightest attention to the dancers. 4. "Hey, there goes Ikto. Let's call him over," they said. "Ikto!" they called but he continued as if he hadn't heard; so they called repeatedly until he stopped; and then they asked, "What's that you carry on your back?" 5. --"These? Why they are just some silly little songs. There is to be a dance farther up, and I've been sent for. That's why I am in a rush; now what are they after?" he added. 6. "O, elder brother, come over here and sing us one tiny little song; just one," they said and again he said, "Indeed not! I've just told you I'm in a hurry. What's the idea?" and he walked on. 7. But they were very insistent, so he relented. "Very well, then," he said, undoing his package and bringing out a single song. 8. "Now, this song has its special regulation; will you heed it?" "Surely," they said. "All right, then. While I am singing it, nobody is to open his eyes," Ikto told them; and they said that would be all right with them. 9. So he got out his drum and began beating it as he sang; so the birds danced, making a rhythmic noise with their feet. It was a good sight to watch them dancing; females included. 10. This is what he said,

Dance with your eyes closed.
 Whoever opens his eye shall get a sty,
 Dance with your eyes closed.

11. They danced with their eyes closed and meantime Ikto was selecting those with the fattest breasts, and killing them in turn. 12. One happened to look, after a while, and seeing many dead, called out, "Fly for your lives! Ikto will kill you all off!" and with that, he flew out of the place; so the rest followed him. 13. Iktomi laughed as he picked up his prey, and, tying the birds into a bunch, he said to himself, "On those rare times when I am faring poorly, that's the trick I work!" and he began looking for a pleasant spot; yonder in the woods was a lovely place where the grass was soft and thick; he built a fire there. 14. Then he set some of the pheasants up on spits to cook, and some he covered with ashes to roast; but while he sat there waiting, two trees in contact overhead kept making a loud squeaking noise each time there was a gust of wind. 15. So he called up, "Little brothers, please don't do that. Why, you will injure each other that way!" But the noise persisted. 16. At last Ikto climbed up one of the trees, planning to hold the two apart, but just when he had his hand between the trees there was a calm, and he couldn't pull his hand out. 17. "Little brothers, little brothers, let me go, please. I am cooking something in ashes and I need to go and attend to it." But his hand continued to be pinned there. 18. At that moment, a wolf was going by, in the distance, on his own business; and Ikto called to him, "Hey! I, a chief-tain, am cooking meat on spits here. Get out; I won't have you eating it up for me!"-- 19. "The idiot might just happen to be talking sense," the wolf thought; so he turned and came over to find out; there, sure enough, was some meat on spits, just about done, so he sat down and ate it all up and then started to go. 20. From overhead Ikto called again, "At least I hope you have left for me what is cooking in the ashes," he said, so again the wolf thought he might just be talking sense and came back to the fire; and sure enough, there were some birds cooking in the ashes. So he brushed them off, and took them and feasted again. 21. He finished and was going off when at last the wind came up again and the trees separated so that Ikto took his hand away and came down, only to find all his food gone. 22. Thus it happened that he didn't eat after all; and he was going away very hungry; when, as he walked along, he came upon the wolf who had taken all his cooking. He was lying dead directly in his path, so Ikto stopped to scold at the dead animal. 23. "There you are; and that's just what you get. Everybody dies like this who tries to pull something on me!" With that, he lifted the wolf to his shoulder and walked along with him. 24. Puzzling as to the best way to handle the body, he walked till he found another pleasant spot in the wood. There he built a fire and sat beside it to think. 25. "I believe I will use at least a piece of this hide as a head-kerchief; and some of it I shall use for a blanket-robe; a

piece will make me some leggings, and --aw shucks, what shall I do with it anyway?" he was saying, and at last he took it in his arms impatiently and said, "It has been done; even very fine things are sometimes discarded!" So he hurled the body into the fire. 26. Now, the wolf wasn't really dead, it appeared, for he sprang up, scattering live coals about, and ran away; so that Ikto was himself so frightened that he repeatedly grasped and let go of himself. 27. From there who knows whither Ikto went? That is all.

¹In expressing disapproval or disgust or displeasure, it is common to do so in the presence of the person provoking it, but not addressed to him directly. If someone fumbles, for example, and tries the patience of another, that other will, in nine of ten cases, say, not "What's the matter with you, anyway!" but "What's the matter with him, anyway!" even though they might be working side by side at something.

Iktomi and the Ducks¹⁸

Iktomi is a spider fairy. He wears brown deerskin leggings with long soft fringes on either side, and tiny beaded moccasins on his feet. His long black hair is parted in the middle and wrapped with red, red bands. Each round braid hangs over a small brown ear and falls forward over his shoulders.

He even paints his funny face with red and yellow, and draws big black rings around his eyes. He wears a deerskin jacket, with bright colored beads sewed tightly on it. Iktomi dresses like a real Dakota brave. In truth, his paint and deerskins are the best part of him--if ever dress is part of man or fairy.

Iktomi is a wily fellow. His hands are always kept in mischief. He prefers to spread a snare rather than to earn the smallest thing with honest hunting. Why! he laughs outright with wide open mouth when some simple folk are caught in a trap, sure and fast.

He never dreams another lives so bright as he. Often his own conceit leads him hard against the common sense of simpler people.

Poor Iktomi cannot help being a little imp. And so long as he is a naughty fairy, he cannot find a single friend. No one helps him when he is in trouble. No one really loves him. Those who come to admire his handsome beaded jacket and long fringed leggings soon go away sick and tired of his vain, vain words and heartless laughter.

Thus Iktomi lives alone in a cone-shaped wigwam upon the plain. One day he sat hungry within his teepee. Suddenly he rushed out, dragging after him his blanket. Quickly spreading it on the ground, he tore up dry tall grass with both his hands and tossed it fast into the blanket.

Tying all the four corners together in a knot, he threw the light bundle of grass over his shoulder.

Snatching up a slender willow stick with his free left hand, he started off with a hop and a leap. From side to side bounced the bundle on his back, as he ran lightfooted over the uneven ground. Soon he came to the edge of the great level land. On the hilltop he paused for breath. With wicked smacks of his dry parched lips, as if tasting some tender meat, he looked straight into space toward the marshy river bottom. With a thin palm shading his eyes from the western sun, he peered far away into the lowlands, munching his own cheeks all the while. "Ah-ha!" grunted he, satisfied with what he saw.

A group of wild ducks were dancing and feasting in the marshes. With wings outspread, tip to tip, they moved up and down in a large circle. Within the ring, around a small drum, sat the chosen singers, nodding their heads and blinking their eyes.

They sang in unison a merry dance-song, and beat a lively tattoo on the drum.

Following a winding footpath near by, came a bent figure of a Dakota brave. He bore on his back a very large bundle. With a willow cane he propped himself up as he staggered along beneath his burden.

"Ho! who is there?" called out a curious old duck, still bobbing up and down in the circular dance.

Hereupon the drummers stretched their necks till they strangled their song for a look at the stranger passing by.

"Ho, Iktomi! Old fellow, pray tell us what you carry in your blanket. Do not hurry off! Stop! Halt!" urged one of the singers.

"Stop! stay! show us what is in your blanket!" cried out other voices.

"My friends, I must not spoil your dance. Oh, you would not care to see if you only knew what is in my blanket. Sing on! dance on! I must not show you what I carry on my back," answered Iktomi, nudging his own sides with his elbows. This reply broke up the ring entirely. Now all the ducks crowded about Iktomi.

"We must see what you carry! We must know what is in your blanket!" they shouted in both his ears. Some even brushed their wings against the mysterious bundle. Nudging himself again, wily Iktomi said, "My friends, 'tis only a pack of songs I carry in my blanket."

"Oh, then let us hear your songs!" cried the curious ducks.

At length Iktomi consented to sing his songs. With delight all the ducks flapped their wings and cried together, "Hoye! hoye!"

Iktomi, with great care, laid down his bundle on the ground.

"I will build first a round straw house, for I never sing my songs in the open air," said he.

Quickly he bent green willow sticks, planting both ends of each pole into the earth. These he covered thick with reeds and grasses. Soon the straw hut was ready. One by one the fat ducks waddled in through a small opening, which was the only entrance way. Beside the door Iktomi stood smiling, as the ducks, eyeing his bundle of songs, strutted into the hut.

In a strange low voice Iktomi began his queer old tunes. All the ducks sat round-eyed in a circle about the mysterious singer. It was dim in that straw hut, for Iktomi had not forgot to cover

up the small entrance way. All of a sudden his song burst into full voice. As the startled ducks sat uneasily on the ground, Iktomi changed his tune into a minor strain. These were the words he sang:

"Istokmus wacipo, tuwayatunwanpi kin han ista nisašapi kta,"

which is, "With eyes closed you must dance. He who dares to open his eyes, forever red eyes shall have."

Up rose the circle of seated ducks and holding their wings close against their sides began to dance to the rhythm of Iktomi's song and drum.

With eyes closed they did dance. Iktomi ceased to beat his drum. He began to sing louder and faster. He seemed to be moving about in the center of the ring. No duck dared blink a wink. Each one shut his eyes very tight and danced even harder. Up and down! Shifting to the right of them they hopped round and round in that blind dance. It was a difficult dance for the curious folk.

At length one of the dancers could close his eyes no longer! It was a Skiska who peeped the least tiny blink at Iktomi within the center of the circle. "Oh! Oh!" squawked he in awful terror! "Run! fly! Iktomi is twisting your heads and breaking your necks! Run out and fly! fly!" he cried. Hereupon the ducks opened their eyes. There beside Iktomi's bundle of songs lay half of their crowd--flat on their backs.

Out they flew through the opening Skiska had made as he rushed forth with his alarm.

But as they soared high into the blue sky they cried to one another: "Oh! your eyes are red-red!" "And yours are red-red!" For the warning words of the magic minor strain had proven true. "Ah-ha!" laughed Iktomi, untying the four corners of his blanket, "I shall sit no more hungry within my dwelling." Homeward he trudged along with nice fat ducks in his blanket. He left the little straw hut for the rains and winds to pull down.

Having reached his own teepee on the high level lands, Iktomi kindled a large fire out of doors. He planted sharp-pointed sticks around the leaping flames. On each stake he fastened a duck to roast. A few he buried under the ashes to bake. Disappearing within his teepee, he came out again with some huge seashells. These were his dishes. Placing one under each roasting duck, he muttered, "The sweet fat oozing out will taste well with the hard-cooked breasts."

Heaping more willows upon the fire, Iktomi sat down on the ground with crossed shins. A long chin between his knees pointed toward the red flames, while his eyes were on the browning ducks.

Just above his ankles he clasped and unclasped his long bony fingers. Now and then he sniffed impatiently the savory odor.

The brisk wind which stirred the fire also played with a squeaky old tree beside Iktomi's wigwam.

From side to side the tree was swaying and crying in an old man's voice, "Help! I'll break! I'll fall!" Iktomi shrugged his great shoulders, but did not once take his eyes from the ducks. The dripping of amber oil into pearly dishes, drop by drop,

pleased his hungry eyes. Still the old tree man called for help. "He! What sound is it that makes my ear ache!" exclaimed Iktomi, holding a hand on his ear.

He rose and looked around. The squeaking came from the tree. Then he began climbing the tree to find the disagreeable sound. He placed his foot right on a cracked limb without seeing it. Just then a whiff of wind came rushing by and pressed together the broken edges. There in a strong wooden hand Iktomi's foot was caught.

"Oh! my foot is crushed!" he howled like a coward. In vain he pulled and puffed to free himself.

While sitting a prisoner on the tree he spied, through his tears, a pack of gray wolves roaming over the level lands. Waving his hands toward them, he called in his loudest voice, "He! Gray wolves! Don't you come here! I'm caught fast in the tree so that my duck feast is getting cold. Don't you come to eat up my meal."

The leader of the pack upon hearing Iktomi's words turned to his comrades and said:

"Ah! hear the foolish fellow! He says he has a duck feast to be eaten! Let us hurry there for our share!" Away bounded the wolves toward Iktomi's lodge.

From the tree Iktomi watched the hungry wolves eat up his nicely browned fat ducks. His foot pained him more and more. He heard them crack the small round bones with their strong long teeth and eat out the oily marrow. Now severe pains shot up from his foot through his whole body. "Hin-hin-hin!" sobbed Iktomi. Real tears washed brown streaks across his red-painted cheeks. Smacking their lips, the wolves began to leave the place, when Iktomi cried out like a pouting child, "At least you have left my baking under the ashes!"

"Ho! po!" shouted the mischievous wolves; "he says more ducks are to be found under the ashes! Come! Let us have our fill this once!"

Running back to the dead fire, they pawed out the ducks with such rude haste that a cloud of ashes rose like gray smoke over them.

"hin-hin-hin!" moaned Iktomi, when the wolves had scampered off. All too late, the sturdy breeze returned, and passing by, pulled apart the broken edges of the tree. Iktomi was released. But alas! he had no duck feast.

The first difference between the oral and written version reveals itself in the way the two stories are framed. Ella Deloria's story opens and closes as a traditional Sioux trickster tale. At the beginning of the story, we see that "Iktomi was walking at random along a creek." The majority of Iktomi tales begin precisely in the same way, with his movement. Iktomi is going somewhere, traveling along, wandering. He

is the wayfarer, skirting the periphery of the various worlds he encounters.

Similarly, the ending of traditional Iktomi tales is also formulaic. At the end of the final episode, the storyteller admits that Iktomi has once again disappeared into his own space, so the only conclusion is simply to end the story. Deloria's version follows the pattern exactly. The storyteller says, "From there who knows whither Ikto went? That is all." He has retreated into the vast store of Sioux folklore and mythology to be retrieved at a future time when stories will again be told. It is unimportant that a given story ends on a grace note instead of a chord of finality, because continuity is established in the collective memory of the tribe and each tale evokes muted overtones from all the others.

For Zitkala Sa, on the other hand, the movement from an oral to written mode presupposes a different audience. Writing changes the fluid context of oral storytelling by removing a given tale from its cultural echo chamber, in which case the author must recreate a communal experience. Though her efforts are quite modest, and it must be said at the outset that Old Indian Legends is written for children, Zitkala Sa does attempt to take into account her new audience by abandoning the formulaic beginning of the Sioux oral tale, substituting in its place a lengthy description of Iktomi.

We are so used to descriptions of characters in short stories and novels that it hardly seems revelatory to say that Zitkala Sa is doing something "new" in describing Iktomi. But, in fact, she is and her departure is radical. It would never be necessary within the oral tradition to describe Iktomi because he is known to everyone. Even a cursory

glance at Deloria's version of the story reflects an almost total absence of descriptive words or phrases referring to Iktomi. Iktomi is defined by his actions alone, not by the storyteller's perception or interpretation of his actions. Implicit in the episodes are the didactic elements because the oral storyteller takes for granted the knowledge of his audience. This assumption does not exist for the author of a written text, as Zitkala Sa recognizes in her description of Iktomi. He is wily, conceited, vain; a naughty fairy and a little imp; heartless and foolish. In her description, though, Zitkala Sa does acknowledge both the tradition from which she is working and the new audience for whom she is writing. For example, the story opens with the statement, "Iktomi is a spider fairy." Spider is, of course, the Dakota translation of Iktomi, but fairy is a European term, suggesting a long tradition of storytelling that will be familiar to her readers.

"Iktomi dresses like a real Dakota brave." Again, within Sioux folklore, he is almost always perceived as a man, but the second level of meaning here is also integral to Zitkala Sa's purpose. She wants to present a view of the Dakota brave and his heritage that will inspire sympathy for the Indian in her readers. Indeed, in her preface to the legends, she states her hope that the stories will stimulate "a further study of Indian folklore, a study which so strongly suggests our near kinship with the rest of humanity and points a steady finger toward the great brotherhood of mankind." The tales are designed not just to preserve and perpetuate the lore of her people, but to convey to a white audience the Indian's humanity because "he seems at heart much like other peoples."

As with the beginning, Zitkala Sa also drops the traditional ending

of "that is all" in favor of a statement that will give shape to the story. In the structure of narrative action, we see another difference between the oral and written forms. The traditional structure of Iktomi tales is largely episodic. Episodes accrete, one upon the other, and there may or may not be a connection between them, yet they all constitute parts of the same story. In "Iktomi Tricks the Pheasants," there are three episodes: Iktomi and the birds, Iktomi and the squeaking trees, and Iktomi and the wolf. In each case, Iktomi inverts the normal order of things so that the "moral" resides in the tension between disequilibrium and equilibrium, or, in this particular instance, between lack and not lack. Iktomi lacks food, he finds and procures food, he loses it again through his own foolishness, he finds a resource (the wolf), and again he throws it away. By failing to observe the order of things--in this case, the exact opposite of what is implied by his last statement: "Even very fine things are sometimes discarded . . ."--Iktomi fails. For the Sioux, whose very existence depended upon the full utilization of every bit of skin, bone, and marrow of the buffalo, this approach to life is tantamount to suicide. Nothing can be thrown away. All parts make up the whole, and the proper approach to each part must be taken. Deprivation cannot be resolved by thoughtless or random action, a theme that each of the three episodes reinforces.

In the ethnographic version, Iktomi literally stumbles upon action because his movements are largely determined by the stimulus of his environment. He hears dancing, stops to listen, locates the source, moves toward it, sees the ducks, and then devises his trick. His actions seem to be motivated by the opportunity that presents itself. Zitkala Sa, on the other hand, makes a slight shift in the sequence of events.

Iktomi sits alone in his wigwam and reflects upon his hunger. Suddenly he moves into action: he gathers grass into a blanket, he puts it on his back, and he starts out on a journey. He is motivated by hunger, devises a plan, and then seeks the opportunity to fulfill it. As if to remind the reader that Iktomi's behavior is not without reason, Zitkala Sa refers to the "wicked smacks of his dry parched lips, as if tasting some tender meat" and describes his "munching his own cheeks" when he sees the ducks. She keeps the image of hunger before our eyes with the result that Iktomi's actions do not appear totally random.

Similarly, once he has the ducks and is roasting them, she balances what has been his deprivation with what is now his bounty, as all of his senses are heightened by the sight and smell of the ducks roasting and he waits impatiently for them to be done. The narrative shape begins and ends with Iktomi in a state of hunger, but rather than introduce the seemingly unrelated episode of Iktomi and the wolf, Zitkala Sa completes the narrative action with Iktomi lamenting the loss of the ducks, thereby infusing a coherence and order into the tale that is absent from its oral counterpart and that is uncharacteristic, in general, of the trickster tale.

Paul Radin has described the classical trickster as the "creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself. He wills nothing consciously. At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control. He knows neither good nor evil yet he is responsible for both. He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being."¹⁹

What is particularly significant for our discussion is the state-

ment, "He wills nothing consciously." Deloria's version of Iktomi and the ducks follows Radin's description in that Iktomi acts upon impulse when a given situation presents itself. But Zitkala Sa breaks away from the oral tradition by rearranging the same events into a pattern that presents Iktomi as one who, indeed, does will things consciously. He premeditates his action by devising a trick and then seeks the opportunity to enact it. In the second episode, she follows more the pattern of oral trickster tales, and Iktomi appears to act without forethought when he climbs the squeaking tree and then admonishes the wolves not to eat his food. That there is a certain ambiguity in the shifting point of view reflects the difficult transition from oral to written form that Zitkala Sa is attempting to make. The very act of writing down a story imposes an order that is, at the very least, four removes from the original: the story itself, the oral storyteller's version, the recollected or remembered version, and the written story.

But, in addition, there is a need for order in the midst of a disintegrating way of life. In the stable community of the tribe, the trickster has mediated between the chaos of the greater universe and the social order of the tribe. Could it be that Zitkala Sa is assuming that role herself in her literature as the old way of life is disappearing? By mediating between the oral tradition and literary form, she is introducing a new order of events that does change the context of storytelling and thereby its form, at the same time ensuring continuity with the past.

Of Iktomi, William Powers observes that "He is responsible for their [animals'] forms and colors, usually given as a result of a misadventure or as a punishment for deception."²⁰ Iktomi tales are often

"explanatory" tales and in this particular tale the phenomenon to be explained is the red eye of the duck. But what else is the story really about? Why does Iktomi trick the pheasants with songs? What meaning exists in the transformation of grass into mysterious songs? It seems that the story ultimately has to do with the importance of ritual and the proper time and place to do things. Just as there are conditions to be observed in storytelling, the same is true for songs and poetry. Songs are not randomly created but rather are associated with the important events of life: birth, courtship, marriage, warfare, death. For example, one of the rituals of Sioux courtship is for a young man to play upon a flute outside the teepee of his beloved; if she wishes to accept him, she will acknowledge the song. The flute is made by a shaman, as is the song to be sung which has been composed according to instructions received by the shaman in a dream. The sale of the flute automatically includes the song. The effect of the song may be so powerful that the woman, almost unconsciously, follows the music, thereby sealing the marriage contract.²¹

Songs are also individual expressions of reverence for the phenomena of the universe. Whatever the occasion, the appropriate ritual must be observed before the singing of a song, a condition which is explicit in both stories. In Deloria's version, Iktomi says, "Now, this song has its special regulation; will you heed it?" The observance is even more elaborate in Zitkala Sa's story in which Iktomi states: "I will build first a round straw house, for I never sing my songs in the open air." Indeed, Zitkala Sa describes in some detail the building of the straw house, emphasizing even more the ritualistic nature of the situation. We might even speculate that the only way Iktomi is able to

dupe the poor birds is because they are observing a ritual and he is not, though their fault lies in accepting blindly what's told to them. And, of course, it is when they have willfully blinded themselves in the dance that they are picked off, one by one. The ending then follows the inversion of the order of things that has been established; i.e., when the birds break the ritual, then do their eyes become red. The deeper irony, though, lies in the failure of the ducks to discern the difference between a true ceremony and a false ritual. And that, it seems, is the fundamental impulse behind the story--that there is an order to things that must be observed and respected and, at appropriate times, celebrated.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

C.

LEGENDS - THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION

1. "Iktomi and the Ducks"

¹Martha W. Beckwith, "Mythology of the Oglala Sioux," JAF, 43 (1930), 339-442.

²Ella Deloria discusses the two divisions of Sioux tales and their form in "Dakota Texts," American Ethnological Society Publications, 14 (1932).

³William K. Powers uses "wicooyake" in his discussion of Sioux tales in Oglala Religion (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1977), p. 83.

⁴See Deloria, Introduction to "Dakota Texts."

⁵Beckwith, p. 429. Beckwith also discusses the variations on the name of Iktomi. He is Iktomi or Ikto to the Tetons, Unktomi for the Santee, Ictinike for the Omaha and Ponka, and Ictcinke to the Oto, Iowa, and Missouri.

⁶Deloria, p. 74.

⁷Beckwith, p. 429. For example, she states, "The folklore of the spider demands that before crushing a spider one should say, 'O Grandfather Spider, the Thunder beings kill you,' so that the Spider Spirit may feel himself powerless to avenge the injury. One should never crush a spider with the hand lest the spider throw sand in one's eyes and make them sore. The hunter fills a pipeful to Iktomi for success in the chase."

⁸"Teton Folk-Lore Notes," JAF, 2 (1889), 134.

⁹This was taken from an unpublished manuscript entitled "Cognitive Style in Oral Literature" by Elaine Jahner of the University of Nebraska, p. 5.

¹⁰For a detailed analysis of their pre-reservation life, see Royal B. Hassrick, The Sioux--Life and Customs of a Warrior Society (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1964).

¹¹"Four Functions of Folklore," The Study of Folklore, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 298.

¹²For further discussion, see T. T. Waterman, "The Explanatory Element in the Folk-Tales of the North American Indians," JAF, 27 (1914), 1-54.

¹³Letter received from Raymond DeMallie, 18 October 1978. Dr. DeMallie is a scholar of the Sioux culture and has most recently catalogued all the Sioux materials at the Smithsonian Institution. He is currently on a post-doctoral fellowship at the Newberry Library in Chicago.

¹⁴Zitkala-Sa, Old Indian Legends (Boston: Ginn and Co., The Atheneum Press, 1901), Preface. All subsequent references will be made to this volume.

¹⁵Irving Howe, Introduction, Jewish American Stories (New York: New American Library, 1977), p. 3.

¹⁶See Stith Thompson, The Folktale (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1946).

¹⁷Dakota Texts, pp. 23-25.

¹⁸Old Indian Legends, pp. 3-15.

¹⁹Paul Radin, The Trickster - A Study in American Indian Mythology (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969; rpt. of 1st edition, New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. ix.

²⁰Powers, p. 84.

²¹Hassrick, pp. 124-126.

C.

LEGENDS - THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION

2. "The Blood-Clot Boy"

Thematically, the tales in Old Indian Legends are linked to Sioux oral tradition through their emphasis on those modes of behavior that ensure individual survival and social harmony. If the Iktomi stories instruct by their inversion of morality, the culture-hero tale informs through example. The story of Blood-Clot Boy, who is a culture hero for many tribes, is particularly well known among the Sioux and is included in Old Indian Legends. In her rendering of the story, however, Zitkala Sa departs markedly from the Dakota oral tradition, and it is as much in her departure from tradition as in her adherence to it that resides the importance of her work to an emerging Indian literary tradition.

I have included here only the text of the oral version of Blood-Clot Boy which is taken from Dakota Texts by Ella Deloria, and, as with the Iktomi story discussed in the previous section, this is a verbatim translation of the Sioux oral account.¹

"Blood-Clot Boy

A rabbit lived happily until a bear and his young came and took possession of his home, driving him out. So he was obliged to dwell in a makeshift hut near by. And each morning the bear stood outside his door and said, "You Rabbit with the ragged muzzle, come out. Your buffalo-surround is full." Then Rabbit came out with his magic arrow, and, with one shot, sent it piercing through each buffalo in turn till all were killed. Then the bear would rush up with his young, and take all the meat home. They never gave the rabbit any meat, and the result was

that he was now very thin. Once again they were cutting up the meat; so he came and stood to one side, but before he even asked for a piece, they ordered him off, so he turned to leave. Somewhat removed from the scene was a blood clot on the ground. So, as he went over it, he pretended to stumble, and picked it up, thrusting it under his belt. And the bear called out, "Hey, there, you worthless wretch, you aren't taking anything, are you?" So the rabbit answered, "No," I only stagger because I am weak from hunger." Then he came home. Immediately he made a sweat-bath over the blood clot. He was busy pouring water over the hot stones when someone within heaved a deep sigh, and then said, "Whoever you are who are thus kind, open the door for me." So he opened the door, and a young man, red (from the heat), stepped outside. Rabbit was very happy. "Oh, would that my grandson had such and such things," he would say, and instantly they would appear, so that all in the same day, he had everything desirable. Everything he wished for was his. But Rabbit couldn't offer him food, for he had none. Then Blood-Clot Boy said, "Grandfather, how is it that you starve while a rich man lives near by?" So Rabbit related everything to him. "Alas, grandson, what do you mean? Why, the fact is that it is I who shoot all the game, and when I am through, the bear comes with his young and they take the meat all away. They always call me by saying, 'Say, you Rabbit with the ragged muzzle, come out; your surround is full.' So I come out, and do the shooting for them." On hearing this, Blood-Clot Boy was very angry. He took a piece of ash and burned it here and there, and made a club, and sat ready with it. As usual, the bear stood outside very early in the morning and said, "Hey, you Rabbit with the ragged muzzle, come on out; your surround is full," he said, so he answered as his grandson had taught him, "Hoh! Get out, what are you talking about? I suppose you'll be claiming all the meat again!" And he didn't come out. The angry bear came in, thinking to force him out, but Blood-Clot boy was ready for him, and killed him with one blow of his club. Then he sent his grandfather to the bear's wife, telling him what to say. He said, "Bear sends for extra help." And the wife called out, "Is that so? How many is he carrying?" He is carrying two buffaloes." -- "That's funny. I never knew him to carry so few!" So the rabbit tried again. "He is carrying three buffaloes," he said. "How funny. He used to carry more than that," she said. So Rabbit said, "He is carrying four buffaloes." And this time the wife said, "Is that so? Well, wait, then." And she started to come out of the tipi but Blood-Clot Boy was ready for her and the moment her head appeared, he struck her with a resounding blow and killed her. Then he entered the bear's home, and found all the bear children sitting in a circle, eating their meal. So he said to them, "Now, if anyone here has been kind to my grandfather, let him say, I," and they all yelled, "I." And then one said, "Do they think that, simply by saying the

word 'I' they will be spared? He who was kind to your grandfather sits over there!" he said. And in the corner they saw him sitting, the very youngest little bear wearing his very brown coat. The rabbit spoke up, "Grandson, he speaks true. Ever so often, he dragged a piece of meat over to me, and pushed it with his snout into my hut." So Blood-Clot Boy said, "In that case, step outside; you shall live." After he had gone out, the boy killed all the other cubs. The rabbit now moved into his old home and as he still had his magic arrow, he provided meat in abundance so that the three, including the little bear, lived without want.

And then one day Blood-Clot Boy declared his plans. "Grandfather, in what direction do the people live?" he asked; so he told him they lived in the west. Then he said he planned to go there on a visit. The rabbit advised him against it vigorously. "No, grandson, I dread it for you. Something very deceptive lives on the way." But that made him all the more eager to be off, and he started. He hadn't gone far before he saw a man shooting at something. "Ah! This must be what grandfather warned me of as not to be trusted," he thought, and tried to go around him, but he called, "My younger brother, come over here and shoot this for me before you go." -- "Impossible! I am on a rush trip, I haven't time to loiter and shoot your game for you!" he said. But he begged so earnestly that he persuaded the boy to turn and come back to him. The boy sent an arrow which pierced the bird; and then he started to go on. But he called again, "That's a fine arrow, younger brother; who would discard it this way?" He shouted back, "Well then, take it and own it," and would go on, but, "My younger brother, please climb the tree and get it for me," he pleaded; so, as the best way to get rid of him, the boy came and prepared to climb the tree. But the man said again, "My younger brother, you better take off your clothes. They are very beautiful; it would be a pity to tear them on the branches." With that he persuaded the boy further, until he removed all his clothes and started to climb the tree in his naked state. He got the arrow and was coming down when he heard the one below saying something under his breath. "Are you saying something?" he called out. "I just said, Hurry down, brother!" he answered. So, "Oh, all right!" he called and continued down. Then, just as he was about to step to the ground, the man called in a great voice, "Stick to the tree!" And at once Blood-Clot Boy became glued to the tree. It was Ikto who had thus deceived him, and now he hurriedly dressed himself in the boy's finery and flung his old garments at him saying, "There, Blood-Clot Boy, put those on!" Then he went towards the village. In that village was a young woman, the eldest child of her parents, and greatly loved by them. "She-dwells-within-the-Circle" was what her name meant. He was going to her. As soon

as he entered the tribal camp, the cry went up, "Blood-Clot Boy comes on a journey, and C'okāp T'íwi is the one he comes for!" The parents immediately gave their daughter to him and placed their tipi within the circle. So Ikto, all in a day, settled into the role of the son-in-law. The next morning he proceeded to demonstrate his supernatural powers. "Let all the young men remove the hair from a buffalo-hide and scatter it about in the bend of the river, beyond the hill." It was done accordingly. Next day he told them to send scouts to see the result. They went; but came back to report that nothing had happened. Now, C'okāp T'íwi had a young sister who stayed around her tipi. She didn't like her around, and ordered her off each time, saying, "Go on away! I don't want her to even look upon my husband!" Finally the girl went crying into the woods and gathered firewood. There she came upon a youth, very handsome, stuck fast to a tree. He said to her, "Young girl, if you have pity, free me from this tree. Ikto has dealt thus badly with me and gone into camp leaving me to my fate." So the girl took her ax and peeled the man off from the tree; and then, sharing her blanket with him, she took him home. And then he said, "Now, go to the one who is living inside the circle and bring my clothes to me; Ikto has worn them long enough." So the girl stood at the door of her sister's tipi and said, "Ikto, you have worn certain clothes long enough; I have come after them for their owner." But her sister said, "Go away. I don't want you to look upon my husband!" But all the while Ikto repeated without a pause, "Hand them out, hand them out." At last then, the young woman realized that Ikto himself had duped her; so she began to cry. Now Blood-Clot Boy put on his own clothes and sat looking very handsome, and said, "Let all the young men remove the hair from a buffalo-hide and scatter it about in the bend of the river beyond the hill." They did so; and the next morning when they went to see, the bend was packed with buffalo, so the people had a real killing, for this young man had true supernatural power. That evening everyone took part of his killing to the council tent where men sat about and feasted and talked; and they say all Ikto took was a shoulder piece; it was all he managed to secure (from some hunter). Soon after, Blood-Clot Boy announced that he was going home, taking with him the girl who saved him. So they made preparations. And the once-proud sister who had been so mean to her younger sister, now rejected Ikto and went following the girl and her young husband. They in turn ordered her back, but she did not have any ears. And so they came on until they neared Blood-Clot Boy's home. The little bear who was sitting on a hilltop saw them. He had been sitting there alone, viewing the country round about. He started up, evidently having seen them, and disappeared downhill in the other direction. Breathlessly he arrived home and said, "Grandson is now returning; but he

brings a woman home." Immediately the rabbit, very happy, ran hopping out to meet them; and taking his grandson on his back¹ he carried him the remainder of the way. The little bear also came to meet them, and he took the daughter-in-law on his back; but she was so heavy (for him) that he could not lift her entirely off the ground; so her feet dragged on behind. As for the proud elder sister, nobody took any notice of her, so she came along behind them, and lived with them there. They kept her to take out the ashes for them. That is all.

¹This is a very great compliment--to be carried on the back.

In Old Indian Legends, Zitkala Sa expands and develops the episodes from the Blood-Clot Boy narrative into three separate short stories. Using Badger instead of Rabbit as the protagonist, she takes the first incident which merits only the opening line in the oral version and shapes it into a story entitled "The Badger and the Bear." Against the background of Badger's complacent and happy life, she builds the tension of Bear's daily visits to share Badger's food. After Bear has grown sufficiently strong, he unceremoniously throws Badger and his family out and takes over the house and the food supply. But in the process of building up to Bear's inevitable takeover, Zitkala Sa fills in many details about Sioux culture that might be unknown to her white audience. For example, she explains the process of air-drying meat and packing it in parfleche bags which are "like a huge stiff envelope, but far more beautiful to see" Or, in another instance, despite Bear's unwanted visits, Mother Badger places "a fur rug in his place" because custom demands such hospitality. When Bear finally announces his coup, Mother Badger is doing her beadwork on buckskin, a primary occupation of Sioux women. And in the sweat house sequence, Zitkala Sa is careful to emphasize the importance of the ritual:

The badger fell on his hands. He fell where the grass was wet with the blood of the newly carved buffalo.

His keen starving eyes caught sight of a little red clot lying bright upon the green. Looking fearfully toward the bear and seeing his head was turned away, he snatched up the small thick blood. Underneath his girdled blanket he hid it in his hand.

On his return to his family, he said within himself: "I'll pray the Great Spirit to bless it." Thus he built a small round lodge. Sprinkling water upon the heated heap of sacred stones within, he made ready to purge his body. "The Buffalo blood, too, must be purified before I ask a blessing upon it," thought the badger. He carried it into the sacred vapor lodge. After placing it near the sacred stones, he sat down beside it. After a long silence he muttered: "Great Spirit, bless this little buffalo blood." Then he arose, and with a quiet dignity stepped out of the lodge. Close behind him some one followed. The badger turned to look over his shoulder and to his great joy he beheld a Dakota brave in handsome buckskins. In his hand he carried a magic arrow. Across his back dangled a long fringed quiver. In answer to the badger's prayer, the avenger had sprung from out the red globules.

(71-72)

Blood-Clot Boy has become the avenger and as the avenger he will face his adventures in the next two stories that complete the narrative of Blood-Clot Boy, "The Tree-Bound" and "Shooting of the Red Eagle." Without the violence of the oral narrative, "The Badger and the Bear" ends with the avenger restoring justice simply by driving out the bears, not killing them. This act completed, he departs to go "over the earth."

In "The Tree-Bound," Zitkala Sa introduces a new plot element that is not in the oral tale of Blood-Clot Boy. Like him, the avenger is going to visit a remote Indian village, but he has a purpose because

There over the Indian village hovered a large red eagle threatening the safety of the people. Every morning rose this terrible red bird out of a high chalk bluff and spreading out his gigantic wings soared slowly over the round camp ground. Then it was that the people, terror-stricken, ran screaming into their lodges. Covering their heads with their blankets, they sat trembling with fear. No one dared to venture out till

the red eagle had disappeared beyond the west, where meet blue and green.

In vain tried the chieftain of the tribe to find among his warriors a powerful marksman who could send a death arrow to the man hungry bird. At last to urge his men to their utmost skill he bade his crier proclaim a new reward.

Of the chieftain's two beautiful daughters he would have his choice who brought the dreaded red eagle with an arrow in its breast.

(77-78)

What is striking about this passage is its similarity to so many European folktales in which the prize for overcoming an assortment of obstacles is the king's daughter. But in addition, as she has with Iktomi, Zitkala Sa creates a reason for the avenger's journey in advance of the departure. In the oral version, the journey is sufficient unto itself. Indeed, the Sioux would automatically interpret a journey by the culture hero as a vision quest, one of their seven sacred rituals.²

After establishing a motivation for the avenger's actions, she immediately switches to the Iktomi sequence in which he tricks the avenger by binding him fast to the tree. But Iktomi's actions are also motivated, as he says

If only I had a magic arrow, I would kill the red eagle and win the chieftain's daughter for a wife.

(83)

And so he proceeds to unfold his plot.

In both the oral version and Zitkala Sa's story, Iktomi is once again the verbal artist, deceiving Blood-Clot Boy with his beguiling requests. One interesting difference between the two versions, though, is Iktomi's manner of address. In Deloria's account, he calls Blood-Clot Boy his "younger brother," a term he uses with almost all characters without regard for the rules of kinship and an immediate signal to a Sioux audience that he is the trickster. In fact, Blood-Clot Boy

is somewhat suspicious. But those clues are removed in Zitkala Sa's story in which Iktomi simply addresses the avenger as his friend, and the avenger, "always ready to help those in distress," cannot refuse his request.

However, Zitkala Sa does adhere closely to the oral account of Iktomi magically glueing the avenger to the tree, because this sequence of events provides a great deal of suspense as the avenger has several opportunities to escape before he is finally trapped by Iktomi's spell. This episode is also central to the meaning of the story as Jahner has demonstrated in her analysis of the Lakota verbal structure of Blood-Clot Boy.³ By immobilizing Blood-Clot Boy on his journey west, Iktomi is able to steal his identity symbolized by his clothes in order to masquerade before the people of the village. It is also, in the oral version, the only way that Iktomi can enter the circle of the band. Ultimately, the story is about one's proper place in the universe as illustrated by the name of the chief's daughter, "She-dwells-within-the-Circle."

The social organization of the Sioux consisted of a series of circles moving out from the basic unit of the family in the teepee in which each member had a special place and into which guests always entered and were seated in a precise manner to the larger tiyospaye in which teepees were placed in relation to each other according to kinship rules and tribal hierarchy. As a symbol, the circle is essential to Dakota culture as Black Elk explains through John Neihardt in Black Elk Speaks:

Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make

their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. Our teepees were round like the nest of birds, and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests . . .⁴

Iktomi aspires to enter the circle which is forbidden to him because of his nature, and Blood-Clot Boy must enter in order to achieve the prize worthy of his heroic nature and symbolic of his passage from one state to another; i.e., he does return home a man with a wife.

Though Zitkala Sa is faithful to the episode of "The Tree-Bound," she eliminates all the Dakota references to the circle, leaving the chief's daughter unnamed. Instead, in the third story which completes the narrative, "Shooting of the Red Eagle," she focuses solely upon the threat of the eagle, the discovery of Iktomi's mistaken identity, and the final victory by the avenger. The ending is resolved by the marriage of the avenger to the chief's daughter, not the woman who frees him, and all ends happily.

It is also interesting that Zitkala Sa eliminates any reference whatever to the multiplication of buffalo, one of Blood-Clot Boy's magic feats, substituting instead the confrontation with the eagle. As their primary food source, the buffalo were essential to the Sioux and clearly integral to this particular story. Blood-Clot Boy is a culture hero because one of his talents is increasing the food supply. But by the time Zitkala Sa wrote her version, the buffalo had been gone for two decades and though once central to the Sioux world view, they had been transformed into a distant memory.

Transformation seems to be the key to Old Indian Legends. In the

narrative just discussed, Zitkala Sa has transformed the tale of Blood-Clot Boy into three distinct but unified short stories, choosing individual episodes to illuminate through extended descriptions and a carefully developed sequence of events, while ignoring other parts of the tradition altogether. Though her legends are clearly rooted in the Dakota oral tradition, they also bear some similarity in form and structure to Euro-American fairy tales. Each story opens in a dimension of space that is timeless: "On the edge of a forest there lived a large family of badgers." Or, "A man in buckskins sat upon the top of a little hillock." The narrative action is internally motivated and where there might be a doubt about the significance of a given movement, Zitkala Sa is explicit and often moralizing as though she is quite conscious of what message ought to be frozen in print. Without the fluidity of the oral storytelling situation in which teller and audience can exchange ideas over an entire winter's evening, Zitkala Sa necessarily has to construct her tales in a way that conveys explicit and didactic moral observations outside the oral context.

Zitkala Sa wrote Old Indian Legends for children because, as she said, "the old legends of America belong quite as much to the blue-eyed little patriot as to the black-haired aborigine," and in seeking to educate her white audience, she selected those traditions and songs of her own heritage that emphasize again and again the value of maintaining individual and social harmony through establishing one's proper relationship to the order of things explicit in the natural world, if one will only take the time to observe that order. Ultimately, her legends are emblems of "place," and in them she charts the symbolic geography of that cultural space in which the traditions of her heritage continue to be vital.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

C.

LEGENDS - THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITION

2. "Blood-Clot Boy"

¹Publications, American Ethnological Society, XIV (1932), 113-120.

²In Oglala Religion (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1977), William Powers defines the seven rituals: The Sweat Lodge, The Vision Quest, Ghost Keeping, Sun Dance, The Making of Relatives, Girls Puberty, Ritual, and Throwing of the Ball (89-103).

³"Cognitive Style in Oral Literature," an unpublished manuscript written by Elaine Jahner, University of Nebraska. In this study, Jahner explores the use of verbs in Blood-Clot Boy to demonstrate how verbal structure in oral tales reflects cultural patterns within the tribe.

⁴New York: Pocket Books, 1977, 10th printing; this edition has been reproduced from the 1932 edition published by William Morrow & Co., pp. 164-165.

CHAPTER III
MOURNING DOVE

A.

THE COLLABORATION OF THE "DOVE" AND "BIG FOOT"

To study the work of Mourning Dove, an Okanogan and perhaps the first American Indian woman to write a novel, is to observe one of the more fascinating collaborative efforts that exists in the history of American Indian literature. The person who would become Mourning Dove's literary mentor and co-author, as well as personal friend and confidant for twenty years, was Lucullus V. McWhorter, a pioneer of encyclopedic interests and founder of The American Archaeologist, who had left his native West Virginia to homestead in the state of Washington in 1903.¹ It was there in 1914 at a Frontier Days Celebration in Walla Walla that Mourning Dove and McWhorter first met, as a J. W. Langdon records in a subsequent letter he wrote to Mourning Dove on September 30, 1914:

While you were here . . . you mentioned in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Williams and Mr. McWhorter that you had been collecting for some time past, reliable data on certain Indian history. I think you mentioned the "Okanogan Sweat House" as a title.

As I understand the matter, you were having some difficulty in arranging your manuscript and putting the data you have secured in proper form for publication, and the thought has occurred to me that while you are at North Yakima, you ought to take that matter up with Mr. McWhorter, who is perhaps the best versed individual in that section of the country on Indian tradition, and has a large experience along this very line of work. I have read considerable of his writings and because of his past study and observation among the people of your race, and his deep interest and consideration of all that pertains to their welfare and protection, I felt that I should write you a line and urge you to take your manuscript to him and go over in detail the things that you feel are valuable.

It is, as you know, one thing to collect reliable data, and quite another thing to put it in proper form for publication. Much depends on the form the data appears in, as to its value and salability. . . .

Personally, I have no interest in the matter in any way, except to see that the data you have does not fall into the hands of some unscrupulous person, or incapable writer.²

Mr. Langdon could not have been more astute in his assessment of McWhorter, a man of the utmost moral integrity whose genuine compassion for the powerless condition of many of the Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest had already led him to fight tirelessly on their behalf. He had, for example, defended the Yakimas in their struggle to protect their irrigation rights against the encroachment of white settlers on the reservation who had the support of the Secretary of the Interior. McWhorter eventually won the battle for the Yakimas in court and in 1913 published a pamphlet entitled The Crime Against the Yakimas which exposed the pattern of abuses against Indians in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Adopted by the Yakimas into their tribe, he was given the honorary name of He-mene Ka-wan or "Old Wolf," a name he used repeatedly in his correspondence with Indian friends. Because of his size, he also became known shortly as the "Big Foot" of the Yakima, and that name was to stick with him throughout his life and to be used consistently by Mourning Dove in all of her correspondence with him. Continuing his interest in Yakima culture and history, he published in 1917 a short book entitled The Tragedy of the Wahk-Shum: Prelude to the Yakima Indian War, 1855-1856.

But McWhorter's interests were not limited exclusively to the Yakima. He also met and became fascinated by a Nez Perce named Yellow Wolf, who had fought with Chief Joseph in the Nez Perce Indian War of

1876. After years of corroborating the old warrior's tale by retracing the path of the battle, taking pictures, and seeking other Nez Perce informants, as well as interviewing survivors of General Howard's army, McWhorter finally published Yellow Wolf: His Own Story in 1940, the first book to describe a major military battle between the U.S. Cavalry and the Indians from the Indian point of view. Though McWhorter died in 1944, he had completed enough notes on the Nez Perce and their history for Ruth Bordin to edit and publish Hear Me, My Chiefs! in 1952.

These works represent only a part of McWhorter's published canon and the merest fraction of his unpublished manuscripts and correspondence. He managed to save everything of interest to him, and since everything from animals to artifacts seemed to be of interest, his personal papers, which are housed in the Archives of Washington State University in Pullman, are an invaluable resource on many subjects. For the study of Mourning Dove, the McWhorter collection is essential because he saved virtually all of her correspondence, as well as various drafts of her manuscript for Coyote Tales (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 1933), all of which offer a rare opportunity for better understanding the creative process of this singular Indian woman.

Like Zitkala Sa, Mourning Dove was very conscious of the passing of an era and the disappearance of age-old customs and traditions of her tribe which she wished to hold on to in some way. But unlike her predecessor, Mourning Dove had none of the advantages of education, having barely achieved more than three years of formal schooling. The very circumstances of her birth on a canoe crossing the Kootenai River near Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, in 1888, seemed to predict the pattern of migrations that she would follow throughout her life back and forth

between her relatives in British Columbia and those on the Colville Reservation near Omak, Washington. The daughter of Joseph Quintasket (born in the Upper Okanogan community in British Columbia but identified with the Lower Okanogan of the United States) and Lucy Stukin (a full-blood Scho-yel-pi or Colville, as the tribe was to be called after the establishment of Fort Colville in 1825), she was given the English name of Christal Quintasket and the Indian name of Hum-ishu-ma, or Mourning Dove. Her paternal grandfather had been an Irishman who worked with the Hudson Bay Company and who apparently had "married" her Indian grandmother under false pretenses in a tribal ceremony. His name was Haynes (or Haines), but his son took the name of his stepfather, Quintasket, which he passed on. Mourning Dove later based much of the plot of her romantic novel, Cogewea; the Half Blood (Boston: Four Seas, 1927), on the betrayal of Indian women by white men.

Mourning Dove's education consisted of a scant three years in the Sacred Heart Convent at Ward, Washington, which was frequently interrupted by trips home to take care of her younger brothers and sisters. However, she did not give up her "sensate longing" for an education, and as McWhorter notes, "from seventeen to twenty-one, through her own efforts, she attended Government Indian schools." In 1912, when Mourning Dove was twenty-four, she enrolled in a business school in Calgary, British Columbia, to learn typing and to improve her English.³

Though her formal education was meager, Mourning Dove was reared for a time by her grandmother and imbued with respect for the traditions of her tribe that would later become the subject of her literature. In his preface to Cogewea, McWhorter writes of Mourning Dove's life with Soma-how-atqu:

Under the tutelage of this venerable parent, the girl's impressionable mind became inoculated with the principles of ancestral philosophy. In the fishing village by the streams; in the hill and mountain camps where the women dugged and cured the various edible roots; where they harvested and dried the wild berries; gathering basket-weaving materials within the deep forests; did she acquire a lasting knowledge of the customs of her tribe. She learned the magic, invigorating virtue of the native foods, and the religious significance of the Song of the Mountain Herb. She was made to understand, and to believe in the mysterious and sacred power of the "Sweat-house," as a cleanser for both body and mind.

(10-11)

Her first husband was Hector McLeod, a Flathead Indian. In 1919, she married Fred Galler, a Wenatchee, and was addressed most often thereafter as either Mrs. Fred Galler or Mourning Dove. She had no children by either marriage. Of her death, Donald Hines writes, "She was plagued over the years with pneumonia, flu, black measles and, particularly, inflammatory rheumatism. in 1936 she was stricken with severe headaches and "flu" in the back of the neck and on 30 July she was admitted to Eastern State Hospital at Medical Lake, Washington. She died there within a fortnight on 8 August 1936; she was 49 years of age."⁴

Hines has also suggested that, despite her physical ailments, Mourning Dove was just plain "tired of living" and it would be no wonder in light of the life style she reveals to McWhorter in her letters. Continually plagued by poverty, she and her husband, Fred Galler, worked as migrant laborers, traveling with the seasons, picking hops and thinning apples, pitching tents and camping out under every imaginable condition. And everywhere they traveled, Mourning Dove took her battered old typewriter and tried to work after long hours in the

field or orchards. In one letter to McWhorter, she describes the conditions that prevented her from doing more writing:

. . . I have had too much to do outside of my writing. We got work apple thinning at Brewster, Wash.; it is about thirty-five miles south of here, and after working for ten hours in the blazing sun, and cooking my meals, I know I shall not have the time to look over very much mss, but fire them on, and between sand, grease, campfire, and real apple dirt I hope I can do the work. . . . We are working for the American Fruit Growers about a mile and half from town. Nice people, glad they don't know I write. I am one of the rest of the Indians there working. Feel better and can work better too.

(Omak, Wash. June 8, 1930)

Folder #269

And in another letter, she says, "We move around so much that I am disgusted getting a frame for my tent and making a comfortable place to live . . . I am trying to write, but lordy with all these mountain pests, I get frantic . . ." (Nespelem, Wash., July, 1919) Folder #329.

In addition to her nomadic life style, which in many ways parallels the hunting patterns of the Okanogans before the advent of the white man, Mourning Dove also had to contend with the relatives who constantly moved in and out of her small shack on the reservation, leaving no privacy for her work at all. She frequently writes to McWhorter that she is "rattled and nervous" because of the noise and confusion of children playing around her, or that she is writing after everyone has gone to bed, though that time too was limited, because she could not afford the oil for the lamp.

But even more than the physical hardships, Mourning Dove's greatest obstacle to gathering the material which she continually referred to as the "folklores" that would later be published in Coyote Stories, were the Indians themselves. In her correspondence with McWhorter,

she repeatedly laments the fact that the Indians are suspicious of her and will not share any legends if they think they are to be published.

From Fairview, British Columbia, she writes in 1918:

They are such hard people to get anything out from . . . There are some that are getting suspicious of my wanting folklores and if the Indians find out that their stories will reach print I am sure it will be hard for me to get any more legends without paying the hard cash for them. A whiteman has spoiled my field of work . . . This Mr. James Teit has collected folklores among the Indians and has been paying five dollars a piece for good Indian legends and naturally that has spoiled the natives and of course they wish the same price from me whether the story is worth a nickle to me.

(Fairview, B.C., March 19, 1918)

Folder #366

Because of the work of anthropologists such as Teit among the Salishan tribes, McWhorter and Dean Guie, whom McWhorter had asked to edit Mourning Dove's "folklores," were very anxious that Mourning Dove be as accurate as possible in collecting her material. She frequently refers to the difficulty of writing those "brain teasers," Okanogan words and names for various characters in the coyote tales. For example, not only was the English alphabet incapable of phonetically representing sounds in Okanogan, but there was no standardized dictionary of the language to which she could turn. These handicaps were further compounded by her own difficulties with English. Thus, Mourning Dove faced enormous challenges in trying to render a word in Okanogan that would "sound" right and approximate at the very least the spelling adopted by anthropologists. The process was agonizing for her and often infuriating as Guie compared her work continually to the ethnographic texts he read, asking her to verify again and again spellings, translations, and even basic beliefs of the Okanogans.⁵

What was particularly frustrating for Mourning Dove was that it had

never been her idea to write "folklores" exclusively, though she did eventually become extremely dedicated to that task. Rather, she aspired to write novels based on the material of her tribe and would have proceeded in that direction had McWhorter not passionately encouraged her to record the tales of her tribe before they were hopelessly corrupted by tribal intermarriage and the influence of white civilization. Indeed, a year after he met her, he wrote an extended plea to her in the form of a romantic vision that she make the choice to save the history of her people. The entire text appears in Appendix B, but the following excerpts will illustrate the force of McWhorter's argument:

Why should this young woman hesitate . . . I see in her vast possibilities. I see a future of renown; a name that will live through the ages, if only she will decide to take the right-hand trail. Helping hands are held out to her, and the trail will not prove so rough as it appears. Her race-blood will be of actual benefit to her in this work. It is a duty she owes to her poor people, whose only history has been written by the destroyers of their race. Let the Mourning Dove of the Okanogans take cheer and step out from the gloom of ghastly fears, into the golden light of opportunity, exulting in her own strength and show to the world her nobility of purpose to perpetuate the story of her people in their primitive simplicity. Nothing is in the way of your success.

I want to hear from you. I want to hear you say that you are going to work. You will like it when you once get started. Write the stories in your own way. Do not think of them not being correctly composed. A second and even a third writing will correct any defect in the first composition. Come down here and let me help you. . . . You want to give the stories as they are told by the old people as near as possible. YOU WILL GET THEM RIGHT. . . . Remember that the only "Big Foot" of the Yakimas is your friend, and that the friends of "Big Foot" are many and of the best. They will all help you.

(November 29, 1915) Folder #392

Such a plea would have been hard for any one to resist, but for an Indian woman with little education and no expectations that her deep desire to write should be recognized, let alone appreciated and so

enthusiastically encouraged, McWhorter's urging became a command, and so began a lifelong friendship between Mourning Dove of the Okanogans and "Big Foot" of the Yakimas. With the support of McWhorter, Mourning Dove began to give some public lectures on the traditions of her tribe and was invited back east to speak, but she did not flourish in this arena as Gertrude Bonnin had, because she was shy and always somewhat fearful of being ridiculed by a white audience. It was also impossible for her to afford the luxury of public engagements because she never had enough money to cover even her basic expenses. The one accolade she did eventually achieve, which meant the most to her, was her election as an honorary member to the Eastern Washington State Historical Society.

McWhorter's idea of encouraging Mourning Dove to record tribal lore for posterity was not unwarranted, particularly as Okanogan culture was rapidly disappearing through tribal intermarriage and death of older members of the tribe. The Okanogan belong to the Salishan language family of north central Washington and British Columbia and speak a dialect of interior Salish that is identical with that of the Sanspoil, Nespelem, Colville, and Lake Indians; their language differs only slightly from the Wenatchi, Chelan, Kalispel, Pend d'Oreille, Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Flathead, Thompson, Lillooet, and Shuswap tribes. All of these tribes are referred to as "Plateau" Indians and inhabit the highlands and river valleys in central and northeastern Washington. Historically, the Okanogan have been divided into two groups, the northern Okanogan of British Columbia, and the Southern Okanogan or Sinkaietk of Washington. The latter is their name for themselves, and it means "People of the water that does not freeze."⁶

By an edict of President Grant in 1872, the Colville reservation

was created in the county bounded by the Columbia and Okanogan rivers and the Canadian border, and to it were assigned the Colville, Methow, Okanogan, Sanspoil, Lake, Kalispel, Spokane, and Coeur d'Alene tribes.⁷ The present-day reservation is somewhat smaller than the original, but it still occupies the Columbia River basin. The Okanogan live on the western part of the Colville Reservation and as of 1930, they numbered only 250-300. In 1938, the Colville Confederated tribes adopted a constitution and govern themselves by tribal council under the supervision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Because the Okanogans have lived in their present position as long as they can remember through their tales, they have no migration legends or creation stories. The closest to an origin tale is the Naming Myth in which the Spirit Chief, qolunco'tn, names all of the animals. In this story, Coyote is given the special responsibility of killing the people-devouring monsters, thus preparing the way for the coming of the "new people," the Indians. Coyote is the culture hero of the Okanogans and often regarded as their ancestor. Both a trickster and a hero, Coyote has a special squ-stenk' power to change himself into any object to protect himself from danger and to kill his enemies. His power resides in his feces which talk to him and advise him. He can also be recalled to life, if but a hair of his being remains, by Fox who possesses shoo'mesh power.⁸

The concept of power, or sumix, is central to the Okanogan world view. Power may be translated as guardian spirit and refers to the special relationship between an individual and an object, usually an animal. One's power was most often obtained in a dream or vision during a "power quest" which took place before puberty. Both boys and girls

were urged, sometimes forcefully, by their parents to fast and then go on their journey to a remote and isolated spot where they would spend the night preparing themselves to receive a vision of their power. Such an ordeal was designed to develop within the child a proper mental attitude, as well as qualities of courage, honesty, concentration and perseverance. If power was not immediately achieved, the child would have to continue the quest, sometimes for up to several months. Cline states, for example, that Okanogan girls often spent an entire summer traveling up and down creek beds in search of power. Having reached power through a dream, voices of an animal, or a sign of some sort, the individual could then write his or her own power song. As adults, those with power were entitled to wear an emblem of their power, such as a bear claw or eagle feather. Power was deemed essential to the success of all endeavors from danger and illness to luck in games of chance.

Besides the possession of sumix, the sweat house was also essential to Okanogan culture. In the naming myth, the Chief Spirit names his wife "Sweat-house" and gives her as a deity to the animal people and those to come to purify them physically and spiritually. Cline describes the sweat-house ritual thusly:

As one dashed water on the hot rocks, he chanted prayers to Sweat House for health or for success in hunting, gambling, love, or any other enterprise of the moment.

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As Coyote, sumix, and Sweat-house are central to Okanogan culture, so are they to Mourning Dove's work. But despite her constant struggle to verify the authenticity of the material she collects, she yields inadvertently at times to pressure from McWhorter and Guie to change some of the "facts" of the legends and traditions to conform to "stand-

ards" of taste and decorum. She also defers to their advice on matters of language and literary form and the result is a curious but fascinating blend of oral and written forms. It is ironic that McWhorter, who had so adamantly insisted upon a faithful rendering of the Okanogan oral tradition, should, eventually and unconsciously, impose his own notions of "correct" form upon those traditions. But, perhaps, that is the inevitable consequence of any literary collaboration, especially one as special as that of Mourning Dove and McWhorter.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

A.

THE COLLABORATION OF THE "DOVE" AND "BIG FOOT"

¹For more biographical information on McWhorter, see Nelson A. Ault, The Papers of Lucullus V. McWhorter (Friends of the Library, State College of Washington, 1959).

²This letter appears in folder #395 of The Papers of Lucullus V. McWhorter, Washington State University Archives, Pullman, Washington. Unless otherwise specified, the correspondence cited in this section on Mourning Dove is from the McWhorter collection. The date of the correspondence and the file number will be subsequently included in the text.

³There is little biographical information available on Mourning Dove's early life. The facts that are included here have been taken from the McWhorter preface to Cogewea and from her own introduction to Coyote Tales. In her later correspondence with McWhorter, she does confirm her lineage but rarely speaks of her education except to lament her lack of knowledge, particularly of English.

It should also be noted that there is some discrepancy concerning Mourning Dove's birth in the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In a letter dated 8 February 1979, Mitchell Bush of the Tribal Enrollment Services answered a request of mine for information on Mourning Dove's enrollment and stated that she is listed on the Colville tribal rolls as Christine Quintasket, born in 1887. I assume that this was an error made by a local BIA official, because Mourning Dove always signs her name as Christal in her early letters. Bush does confirm her marriages to Hector McLeod and Fred Galler.

There is one other interesting fact to note about her name. Prior to 1921, she signs it "Morning Dove." Then, on 27 December 1921, she writes to McWhorter from Spokane, Washington: "By the way, I have made a sad mistake. I have misspelt my name, I found out at the museum. Looking over the birds, I found that I was wrong . . ." And so, "Morning" becomes "Mourning."

On 23 February 1926, she writes again about her name: "You asked me about Humishuma. As far as I can translate it, it really has no meaning at all besides the name of the bird Mourning Dove. And it does not mean Mourning Dove at all, and as far as I can judge it, the whiteman must have invented the name for it as Mourning Dove because the translation to Indian is not word for word at all."

It is entirely possible that whites did "invent" the translation for Humishuma, because, according to Leslie Spier, Okanogan women were never named after animals or birds, but rather were most often given

names that referred in some way to water, emphasizing the importance of rivers and fishing to their culture. See Leslie Spier, ed. "The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanogan of Washington," General Series in Anthropology, #6 (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Co., 1938), pp. 1-262.

⁴Tales of the Okanogans, ed. Donald M. Hines (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1976). This collection, which will be discussed more extensively in the section on Coyote Tales, is based on Mourning Dove's manuscripts in the McWhorter collection.

⁵The tales that Teit collected were published as "Okanogan Tales" in Folk-Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, collected by James A. Teit, Marian K. Gould, Livingston Farrand, Herbert J. Spinden; ed. Franz Boas (Lancaster, Pa.: American Folklore Society, 1917), pp. 65-97.

⁶Very little has been published on the history or ethnography of the Okanogan. The best study is the one by Leslie Spier that has already been listed in footnote 3. Of especial value in Spier's volume is the essay "Religion and World View" by Walter Cline in which he discusses in great detail the concept of power and the Sweat House Ritual. Other works include: C. Hill-Tout, "The Far West--The Home of the Salish and Dene," British North America, Vol. 1 (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907); Leslie Spier, "Tribal Distribution in Washington," General Series in Anthropology #3 (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1936); and James Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus," 45th Annual Report (Bureau of American Ethnology, 1930), pp. 198-294.

⁷Edward S. Curtis, The North American Indian, 7 (1911), 43-114.

⁸For a fuller discussion of Coyote, see Eileen Yanan, Coyote and the Colville (Omak, Wash.: St. Mary's Mission, 1971); Walter Cline, "Religion and World View," The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanogan of Washington, ed. Leslie Spier. Cline also discusses in detail the Okanogan concept of power and the importance of the sweat house.

B.

COGEWEA, THAT "LITTLE SQUAW"

When Mourning Dove first met McWhorter in 1914, she had already drafted a version of her novel that would eventually be published thirteen years later under the title Co-ge-we-a, The Half-Blood--A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range (Boston: Four Seas, 1927). Encouraged by McWhorter's interest in her, she apparently sent him her manuscript for his comments. Unfortunately, there is no record of that initial correspondence, nor is there an extant copy of Mourning Dove's original manuscript (though she does state in one letter that she had saved her first pencil version), but subsequent correspondence indicates that Mourning Dove agreed to let McWhorter "fix up" the story of that "little squaw" and eventually to act as her business manager as well, handling all negotiations for its publication. For example, she writes to McWhorter from Montana in 1916, saying "I am glad that you are nearly through with Cogeawea . . . I know I have to take time and write you for the sake of our little squaw." And in 1917, from British Columbia: "I am very sorry that Cogeawea has taken some more of your valuable time. I hope she can be able to repay you a little. . . . You never hinted what you wish from that 'squaw'." And as late as 1933, long after the publication of Cogewea, Mourning Dove says, "I frequently think how fortunate that I met you. My book of Cogeawea would never have been anything but the cheap foolscap paper that it was written on if you had not helped me get it in shape. I can never repay you back . . ." Of

her collaboration with McWhorter, she writes the following to their mutual friend and mentor, J. P. MacLean, in 1916:

We both worked hard on it and we sometimes almost went on the warpath, but we always patched up a peace and continued friends. He helped me with Cogewea, but the next time I am going to let him make the plot and I will help him.¹

Both MacLean and McWhorter were extremely optimistic about the potential for success of Cogewea because they were convinced that Mourning Dove was the first Indian woman to write a novel of any sort, which alone should tweak the curiosity of the reading public, and certainly the first to incorporate the oral traditions of her tribe into a literary form. But because there was no precedent for an Indian woman writing romance, McWhorter felt compelled to "strengthen the statements" of Mourning Dove, as he put it, by providing ethnographic notes on the stories and traditions that she had woven into the narrative line. At the same time, he had agreed to be the Sho-pow-tan of the title page and allow the story to be "told through him." This dual role as editor and annotator unquestionably gave McWhorter a tremendous amount of control over Mourning Dove's manuscript, leading to what Charles Larson has described as the "confusing voice" in Cogewea.²

Mourning Dove's intention from the beginning had been to write a romance about the half-breed Cogewea, whose name means the little chipmunk in Okanogan, that was based on her own experience and that would preserve in novel form some of the stories of her tribe that had not been recorded. Despite the inclusion of the Okanogan elements, Mourning Dove regarded Cogewea as fiction, refusing at one point, for example, to allow McWhorter to include a picture of her on the title page because that was appropriate only for historical works. Eventually, she did

concede to McWhorter and allow her picture to be used. McWhorter, on the otherhand, felt, and perhaps rightly so, that the uniqueness of the novel lay in its explication of those elements informing the Indian point of view. Unfortunately, he could not stick just with his explanatory footnotes, but felt compelled to insert into the narrative innumerable didactic passages about the injustices suffered by Indians at the hands of government agencies, as well as historical facts about other tribes that are hardly relevant to the story. The result is that the narrative, which is very much within the tradition of the western romance with its stock characters and measure of melodrama, becomes overburdened in parts with a platitudinous moralizing that does not always mesh with other sentiments expressed in the novel. Despite their heavy handedness, however, these passages do reinforce the point of view of the novel which is unquestionably Indian, as McWhorter describes in a letter to MacLean on January 3rd, 1916:

. . . The story is that of a half-blood girl; of the Okanogan tribe; but the scene is on the Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana. The story is a true depiction of events there at that time. It graphically portrays the social status of the Indian, especially the half-bloods; or "breeds." It is given from the Indian standpoint and by one well qualified to write on the subject. Morning Dove rode in the great roundup of the buffaloes sold to the Canadian Government and is well versed in the ways of the range.

Cogeawea is a wild-natured girl, a graduate of the Carlisle Indian School, who is making her home with her elder sister who is married to a white man. An eastern adventurer comes along and wins the affection of the Cogewea, and tries to induce her to marry him according to the old Indian custom. This she refuses to consider, since he is a white man. At last he learns that she has money, and agrees to take her to the priest, according to the white law.

In the meantime, a half-blood rider of the range has sought the hand of Cogeawea, and of course there is no love between the rivals. Stemteemă (grandmother),

an aged squaw, has read the true character of the Shoyahpee (white man) and endeavors to dissuade the girl from having anything to do with him. She narrates to her the coming of the first whites, the "Black Robes," and the fate of "Green Blanket Feet," who was beguiled into marrying a white man. This is a thrilling story of the adventures of the poor woman; and is a TRUE, though unwritten narrative. This, in time, is followed by a tale of Lewis and Clark, a true story as preserved by the older Indians. It reveals a phase of life, or events, never made public. . . . At last, everything else fails; the aged squaw resorts to the Sweat House, and evokes the spirits with song and prayer. It is a touching narrative and is true to Indian life. All through the story, the writer has stuck close to her theme and all her characters are real living subjects.

The three last chapters are still in the crude and we can not well determine just how it is to be ended. Morning Dove is averse to a tragedy, while I think that the white renegade should be killed; and yet I am opposed to killing in any form. . . . She says that the white man shall not marry her Cogewea; and this leaves but two trails to choose from. One is to let the half-blood rider, who is a strong manly fellow, marry her; or end all in tragedy of death to this hero. Either is good and would be true to the times and characters depicted.

(392)³

The ending that Mourning Dove and McWhorter eventually settled on is a happy one. Ignoring the repeated warnings of her grandmother, Cogewea decides to elope with Densmore, the avaricious eastern tenderfoot, but is saved from a near tragic marriage by her own inadvertent honesty. In answer to Densmore's probing, she guilelessly reveals that she has no money at all, which so enrages him that he ties her to a tree, takes the little bit of money that she has brought along for their trip, and abandons her. She is rescued by the faithful Jim LaGrinder, the breed foreman of the H-B ranch and the "best rider of the Flathead," whom she marries two years later after duly repenting her folly. At the same time, she is suddenly notified that, through a technical error in his will, her white father, who had abandoned her

Indian mother to go to the gold fields of Alaska, has left Cogewea and her two sisters, Julia and Mary, each a quarter of a million dollars.

Though Mourning Dove and McWhorter had finished their collaboration on Cogewea by 1916, it was not to be published for another eleven years. This delay created a particularly difficult situation for Mourning Dove who had been interviewed in the spring of 1916 by the Spokesman Review of Spokane. The article not only hailed her as the first American Indian novelist, but also falsely credited her, ironically, with as much land and potential wealth as Densmore had assumed Cogewea possessed. Given the poverty that plagued Mourning Dove all of her life, this was a particularly cruel charge, and one that she spent a number of years trying to undo. In addition, it was embarrassing to continually have to explain why the book was not being published, as she does in one letter to the editor of the Spokesman Review dated January 13th, 1918:

This work has been delayed in its publication because of the war, but will now soon be placed before the public.

(272)

And to Big Foot, she writes three months later,

We cannot do anything that will be of help to us, I am sure till this bloody struggle is over with. The people are war crazy, and our line of literature will never appeal to the public now as it would in times of peace.

(366)

Despite the war and the mood of the reading public, the biggest obstacle that Mourning Dove and McWhorter faced was finding a publisher for Cogewea. Apparently, they had to guarantee sales and arrange partial financing for the book before some publishers would even agree to look at the manuscript. Alternately pleading and cajoling, McWhorter wrote innumerable letters to publishers trying to convince them that, on the

basis of advance publicity, so many copies of the book would be bought; or that they should publish the book for moral reasons because, "coming from the pen of an Indian," it would serve to bring about much needed reforms in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

He even sought the help of his more influential friends, such as Martha McKelvie, the wife of the Governor of Nebraska, who writes to him in 1921, saying,

I shall think over my list of friends who have a pot of gold and if I find one will surely head their attention your way. Some of the publishing houses are glad to publish for nothing and after the cost of the first edition is taken out of the returns, pay the writer a royalty. Why don't you submit first to some decent houses, like Christopher of Boston. Or, why not try selling to a newspaper syndicate the Sunday story rights, and that will bring you enough money to pay for having the book published.

(365)

Eventually, McWhorter did find a house in Boston, the Four Seas, to agree to publish Cogewea, but only on the condition that Mourning Dove and McWhorter would finance part of the publication. To raise her portion of the money, Mourning Dove worked longer hours thinning apples and even opened a lunch stand for a brief time. Finally, the money was raised somehow and the manuscript turned over to the publishers. But more delays ensued for another two years, causing McWhorter to irately accuse the "Four Puddles" (their favorite name for the Four Seas) of being "carelessly negligent," while Mourning Dove accepted her disappointment in "that little squaw" who seemed to be a "quitter" with stoicism.

But if she had been disappointed by all the setbacks encountered in getting Cogewea published, Mourning Dove was completely overwhelmed by the final product in which she suddenly realized the full extent of

McWhorter's influence, as she notes in a letter to him dated June 4th, 1928:

Dear Big Foot,

I have just got through going over the book Cogeawea, and am surprised at the changes that you made. I think they are fine, and you made a tasty dressing like a cook would do, with a fine meal. I sure was interested in the book, and hubby read it over and also all the rest of the family neglected their housework till they read it cover to cover. I felt like it was some one else's book and not mine at all. In fact the finishing touches are put there by you, and I have never seen it.

(401)

The "finishing touches" consisted of poetic epigraphs under each chapter heading taken from western writers such as Badger Clarke, as well as excerpts from Hiawatha; sixteen pages of detailed footnotes explaining Okanogan words and customs and corroborating various stories and incidents in the novel; and somewhat elaborate explanations within the text of such things as the custom of exchanging gifts among the Pend d'Oreille and Nez Perce tribes. Besides inserting his own research into the novel--for example, he includes historical notes about Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce--McWhorter also plagiarized the complete section on Indian music that is included in chapter eight from Anna Hurst, a scholar of Indian music. On June 23, 1928, she writes to McWhorter that she has just read Cogewea "with great pleasure" but she also notes that Mourning Dove has "used almost the same words and phrases" that she had used in her "little talk on the stage."

But it is in the language of the novel that McWhorter's impact is most obvious because some of the passages are totally unlike Mourning Dove's own direct and simple style as reflected in her original drafts for Coyote Stories. Language was for her a constant challenge as she struggled to translate into English what she knew in Okanogan. Even as

late as 1930, she writes to McWhorter the following:

I am still studying hard nearly every day, so I
can learn to place my words for my writing and
recasting of my new novel of the Okanogans.

(441)

Deeply offended by the accusation of the local Indian agent that McWhorter had written all of Cogewea, and, perhaps, sensitive to the element of truth in those statements, Mourning Dove had determined to prove to the world that she could write a novel by herself. (Unfortunately, whatever she did write has not been discovered.) Despite the overwhelming evidence of their collaboration in the correspondence, McWhorter wrote a letter to the agent, publicly acclaiming Mourning Dove as the sole author of Cogewea, and the agent recanted his statements.

Yet, it is hard to imagine that Mourning Dove would have authored such passages as Cogewea's description of the Bureau of Indian Affairs:

. . . a nasty smear the Government escutcheon . . .
a stagnant cesspool swarming with political hatched
vermin! stenchful with the fumes of avarice and greed;
selfishly indifferent to the Macedonian cry of its
victims writing under the leash wielded by the hand
of Mammon! Pitch is a fastidious cosmetic, compared
with the Bureau slime.⁴

Or Cogewea's response to Densmore when he asks if she is in a "scalping mood":

If I were, the subject material immediately avail-
able would hardly suffice for the appeasement of
my warlike proclivities.

(147)

During her reveries on her favorite rock on the butte overlooking the vast plains below, Cogewea becomes the mouthpiece for a compendium of information ranging from exhortations against the "blighting curse" of the Indian Bureau to elegies on the tragic demise of the Blackfeet. The Bureau is an "octopus with life extracting tentacles reaching into

every Indian reservation of the Union. A Vampire! whose wing cools with the breeze of never-to-be filled promises" (140). In contrast are those "Heroes, patriots! Victims of plutocratic chicanery and broken faith on the part of the 'powers that be'"! (141).

Throughout the novel, there are many such passages in which the language is stiff, formal, and highly rhetorical. It is interesting that McWhorter himself apparently had some doubt about whether or not such language was appropriate for an "Indian" writer because he seeks the advice of a very close friend who indignantly asks, "Why shouldn't a high class Indian use decent language?"⁵ The point, of course, is well taken; and yet "decent" language does not necessarily imply stilted and unnatural language and such passages become further linguistic eyesores because they contrast so sharply to the Okanogan tales told by Cogewea's grandmother which more clearly reflect Mourning Dove's own voice.

In contrast to the obviously inflated style of some of the passages is an equally self-conscious use of slang. The setting for Cogewea is the H-B ranch, owned and operated by John Carter, the husband of Cogewea's sister Julia. As the novel opens, Carter has hired the best riders around to help in the annual cattle round-up, as well as in the round-up of several hundred bands of wild horses to remove them from the Flathead Reservation because it has just been opened to settlers. Acknowledging riding as their profession and the accepted means to gain status and prestige, the "boys" of the H-B frequently accede to that adage that "boasting is a recognized weakness of the range," slipping into the vernacular to swap stories of their prowess.

When the inexperienced Densmore first arrives at the ranch as the new hired hand, for example, he is initiated into both slang and riding.

Knowing that the boys have planned to give him the meanest horse on the ranch to ride, Cogewea anxiously asks Densmore if he can ride a "genuine bronc." Assuming a "bronc" to be a western phrase for donkey, Densmore replies that he can. And, of course, the "boys" are gleeful in their anticipation of the fun to come, as Jim LaGrinder, recognized by all as "the best rider of the Flathead," says,

No rider ever wears a stiff caddy; and Croppy hates a plug-hat worse nor pizen. John said to give him an old skate to ride, but he aint a goin' to loco our little show.

(51)

Predictably, Densmore is thrown from the "donkey" and breaks his arm.

But slang is not confined just to passages about riding the range. It is the medium of the range, a kind of lawless expression full of "infelicities," reflecting the open freedom of the West that men such as Rodeo Jack, Silent Bob, Celluloid Bill, Jake, and Frenchy have sought. It is their bond of mutual understanding and acceptance, a regional code that can be both humorous and frustrating if the listener doesn't fully comprehend all the short cuts taken. In the following passage, for example, Silent Bob admonishes Cogewea against her own excessive use of "high flown" language:

"I'm a thinkin' yo' all'd make a good preacher woman. Them there kind what wants ter be made perlice wimin an' jedges an' th' main push. Wantin' to wear th' breeches an' boss th' hull shebang. I hater . . ."

"What do you mean?" Cogewea laughed, her mood instantly changing. "A missionary, a police matron, or what?"

"Why! them there wimmin that go out an' make speeches an' everythin' else. Yo 'know what's allers in th' noospapers,' 'bout their doin's. Ev'ry paper a feller parooses says somethin' 'bout people a throwin' rotten aigs at 'em. I fergit that there name they call 'em, but yo' oughter know. I hater talk so much 'bout---"

"Oh! I know what you are referring to. Suffragettes."

"Y-a-s! that's 'em. People a bowlin' aigs at 'em."

"And that is why you want me to turn suffragette, so you can pelt me with stale eggs?"

"N-no! I didn't mean that there way. I was jes' a kiddin'; 'cause yo'r a dam' good win' jammer."

"Well! now! I don't know whether to regard that as a compliment, joke or a slur."

"Aw! I was only jokin'. Can't yo' take a tumble? I hater have ter 'splain so much; I hater get so tired a talkin'."

(42)

Despite a friend's warning not to overdo the use of slang, Mourning Dove and McWhorter liberally sprinkle Cogewea with words and phrases like "savey," "tumble," "hittin the trail," "busted tenderfoot," "hater," "callin of the blood," "hit the hay," and so forth. And yet there is a curious way in which the language, whether it is highly stylized rhetoric or slang full of colorful regionalisms, does reinforce the racial theme of the novel. Described as a "'breed'!--the socially ostricized of two races" in the opening paragraph of the novel, Cogewea wonders if there is any place for the "despised breed." Throughout the novel, she describes the rejection she feels from both races. It is her reason initially not to marry Densmore because white men have notoriously taken advantage of Indian women. Yet, when she enters the horse race for "Squaws" at a Fourth of July celebration, she is as spurned by the Indian women as she has been by the whites in the "Ladies" race. Of her dilemma, she comments,

We are between two fires, the Red and the White. Our Caucasian brothers criticize us as a shiftless class, while the Indians disown us as abandoning our own race. We are maligned and traduced as no one but we of the despised "breeds" can know . . .

(41)

Though she goes on to say that she prefers "living the white man's way to that of the reservation Indian," she will never "disown her mother's blood." This conflict of selves forms the tension of the novel and

most explicitly reveals itself in Cogewea's language. Early in the novel, her faithful friend and admirer, Jim, comments on her language:

. . . Sometimes you talk nice and fine, then next time
maybe you go ramblin' just like some preacher-woman
or schoolmarm. Can't always savey you.

(33)

Cogewea's conflict is as linguistic as it is social, and though there can be no doubt that McWhorter's heavy editorial hand has grossly inflated the language beyond the narrative demands of the novel, the wide swings between formality and colloquialism indicate her conflict.

In much the same way as Zitkala Sa eventually resolved the fact of her education by recording the stories of her tribe, Cogewea announces her own aspirations for writing a book, realizing that the "threads in the woof of her people's philosophy must be irretrievably lost unless speedily placed on record." Thus from the outset, Cogewea is the observer and the participator, and the ambivalent voice in the novel derives from her dual function. On the one hand, she verbally records the travesties of justice endured by the Indian in her oratorical tirades against the Bureau of Indian Affairs and blind racial discrimination. On the other hand, she is the feminine protagonist of a western romance; Cogewea, the little chipmunk, caught in the space between the two worlds of her birth. She becomes a symbol for the condition of the Indian who stands between tradition and change, observing the passing of an era and yet unable to adapt completely to the white way of life. All Indians are breeds in the sense that they have irrevocably inherited the legacy of white civilization and can never return to the way it was before the coming of the white man. A sense of loss will always haunt their landscapes and for Cogewea, the reminder of the past glory of her culture and

that of other Indian tribes resides in the bleached bones of a buffalo skull that lies near her favorite place on the plateau where she frequently goes to seek solitude. In those moments, she looks beyond the panorama of scenic beauty to envision nomadic Indian tribes peopling the great plateau in search of the ever plentiful buffalo. Both are gone now. As the last herd of the buffalo has been corraled and sold to the Canadian government, so have the Indians been confined to the ever tightening circle of the reservation.

The question that continually confronts Cogewea concerns place. Where is her place in the world? Just as Zitkala Sa was unable to return permanently to Yankton to live after she had been educated, so too does Cogewea experience alienation occasioned by the education that has equipped her to be critical of the demoralizing conditions of reservation life. And yet there is the continuing pull of her Indian heritage, urging her to remain faithful to the traditional way of life. As Paula Gunn Allen, a Laguna Sioux poet and critic, has pointed out, "the crucial factor in alienation is the unconscious assumption that one must ally with one segment of one's experience and not with another; the world is seen in terms of antagonistic principles"⁶ and in Cogewea's world, the tension of opposites exists between the Indian and white worlds, tradition and change. Assimilation is, in part, inevitable, and the old way is passing. Cogewea reflects, for example, on the plight of her grandmother who "knew many interesting tales of the past . . . but who was lingering pathetically in the sunset of a closing era." In contrast are the young people who "are interested in their tribal legends only to the extent of 'cramming' some ardent writer with palpable absurdities. They have progressed beyond the pristine

days. The airy tepee has given place to the stuffy houses of their conquerors." The primitive has yielded to the modern and the natural world has receded behind the material advances of technology. And yet, Cogewea passionately claims to Densmore,

The true American courses in my veins and never will
I cast aside my ancestral traditions. I was born to
them.

(160)

And here is the beginning of a thematic pattern that will dominate contemporary Native American literature. The Indian, educated off the reservation by whites, abandons for a time the traditions of his heritage. During this liminal state of trying to pass from one way of life to another, the protagonist becomes alienated from those intuitive and spiritual faculties that have been his touchstone for truth. As he becomes further disoriented, he suffers an emotional and psychological crisis that often places him in physical danger and threatens a total disintegration of the self. The resolution of the conflict comes only when the protagonist recognizes and returns to the traditions of his Indian heritage. Though he may never be fully accepted back into the fold, he has a new awareness of the imperatives of his birth and of his place in the world.

As a breed, Cogewea has the apparent option of choosing either the white world or the Indian world. She stands between her two sisters who represent both. Mary has remained with the Stemteemä and observes a traditional way of life, while Julia has married a white man and assimilated into white culture. The difficulty that Cogewea faces is how to find the middle road that will allow her to appreciate the amenities of civilization without compromising her fundamental beliefs. If there is a "confusing voice" in the novel, it is in part due to this ambivalent

attitude toward assimilation. Despite the obvious villainy of Densmore, who is variously described as a coyote, the arch conspirator, and a rattle snake, all of the other white characters in the novel are sympathetically drawn. John Carter, Julia's husband, is a model of warm respectability, tolerant of the mischievous pranks of Cogewea and the boys, and yet firm and fairminded in running the ranch. Silent Bob, the quiet southerner, reveals his deep capacity for brotherly love in his friendship with Dixie Canary and his concern over Cogewea's fate with Densmore. Even Celluloid Bill rises to Jim's defense when he realizes his part in nurturing Densmore's greed by falsely claiming that Cogewea possesses great wealth. And, finally, Frenchy is totally charming as the foreign tenderfoot who perseveres in spite of himself to become a cowboy and loyal friend to the other riders.

Unquestionably, as Larson has pointed out, there is a definite disparity between the portrayal of these characters and the constant railing of Stemteemă against whites and racial intermarriage, but perhaps this discrepancy springs from an unconscious desire on Mourning Dove's part to envision a universe in which the Indian and white worlds do not have to remain polarized forever. After all, she has found support and encouragement for her endeavors in a white man who strives to understand her world. But this impulse toward reconciliation is fleeting in the novel because of history. There have not been enough McWhorters in Indian-white relations to hope that such a utopia can yet be realized, and the white blood that does flow in the "breeds" has too often been the result of betrayal. The recurring motif of Densmore's insistence upon an "Indiar" marriage ceremony is a reminder of the ignominious way white men have deceived Indian women by devaluing their rituals as much

as themselves. The half-blood offspring become visual images of the powerless condition of Indians whose only weapon for counteracting the evils of a prejudiced white world is to rely on the age-old traditions of their Indian heritage that have thus far ensured their survival.

And it is to those teachings and to a recognition that her place in the world is with her own kind that Cogewea ultimately must turn. Despite her decision to elope with Densmore, Cogewea has not been deaf to her grandmother's teachings or to the voice of her own "Indian Spirit" that has warned her she is "stepping wrong" and embarking on a "questionable course." Indeed, the real struggle in Cogewea's soul centers on the truth of the beliefs she has inherited from her Indian half. Though she is quick to defend the Indian customs and ceremonies against Densmore's disdainful cynicism, she suffers her own doubts at times about the place of those traditions in the modern world. Does the breaking of the stone in the sweat house, for example, really portend disaster, as tradition has taught her? Despite the thousand examples of the truth of her inherited traditions, Cogewea struggles against them for a time as her feelings for Densmore cloud her vision.

But the Stemteemā does not doubt and it is primarily through her character that Mourning Dove incorporates elements from the oral tradition into the novel. Just as Mourning Dove was reared for a time by her own grandmother, so has Cogewea been taught the beliefs of the Okanogans by Stemteemā who is the embodiment of the oral tradition, appearing in the narrative at key points to instruct Cogewea in right action. Ironically, it is when Cogewea has gone to town to pick up her aged grandmother and Mary, who have come for a visit, that she meets Densmore and decides to play a trick on Carter by hiring the tenderfoot.

From the beginning, then, Stemteemä and Desnmore counterbalance each other, representing the various tensions in the novel--Indian versus white, truth versus falsehood, tradition versus "civilization."

Stemteemä is tradition itself. More than a hundred years old, she is the link to the past, the one who has learned the stories of her tribe and been charged by her father to pass them on. As the oral historian of the Okanogan, she adheres to as many of the "old-time customs" as her age permits. She arrives in her "semi-civilized garb," wearing "wampum and ear ornaments . . . and beaded mocassins." She prefers her tepee to the ranch house, "after the ancient manner of her fading race," and pursues basket weaving in the morning hours. Before every major decision and before telling a story, she ritualizes the occasion by smoking a pipe. And though times have changed, she continues to instruct her grandchildren in the customs of another era, recounting stories about the coming of the first whites and tragedies that have befallen her tribe. Most importantly, perhaps, the Stemteemä consults the Sweat House and evokes her Spirit Power when she is troubled and seeks the solace of a spiritual force greater than herself.

In all of these passages, despite the intrusion of an occasional cliché, it is Mourning Dove's voice that is clearly heard. Though McWhorter unquestionably edited Mourning Dove's language, he could not have known all of the elements of Okanogan culture that are woven into the narrative. There are too many letters in which Mourning Dove answers detailed questions about the meaning of various Okanogan words or gives the history behind a story or explains the relationship between the folktales and the mystic number of the Okanogan. Despite McWhorter's friendship with the Yakima and his life-long research on the Nez Perce,

he was never able to go among the Okanogan on the reservation because whites were not allowed, as Mourning Dove explains to him in one letter. In other words, Cogewea is truly the result of a rare collaboration. Just as Mourning Dove would have been incapable of authoring the sections dubbed by her as the "roasting of the Shoyahpees," so would it have been impossible for McWhorter to know, let alone fully comprehend, the intricacies of the Sweat House ritual or the concepts behind Spirit Power.

Indeed, the inspiration behind Cogewea is an Okanogan folk tale that McWhorter would only have learned when Mourning Dove began recording tales for Coyote Stories. The story from which the heroine's name is taken has been variously titled "Little Chipmunk and the Owl Woman" and "Coyote Kills Owl Woman." In each version, "Little Chipmunk (Kots-se-we-ah) is a gay, mischievous girl who frisks about without a care until trouble appears, then runs for shelter to her patient, hardworking Grandmother."⁷ One day while she is picking berries for her grandmother, she is spotted by Owl Woman who eats the hearts of children. She runs to hide but Owl Woman captures her and tears out her heart. Meadow Lark brings her back to life, and Coyote plots to kill Owl Woman. The point here is the relationship between Little Chipmunk and her grandmother, which is, of course, the heart of Cogewea. Though Densmore tries to steal Cogewea's heart and almost succeeds in destroying her, she is saved and returns to the wisdom of her grandmother, saying at the end of the novel,

I was blind not to listen to Stemteemä's
warnings from the Indian spirits.

(278)

The impulse reverberating through Cogewea is Okanogan and that belongs

only to Mourning Dove who shares her knowledge through Stemteemā.

Whether Stemteemā recounts the history of her tribe or admonishes Cogewea to beware of Densmore, the language is direct, simple, and slightly stylized to emphasize the wisdom of the aged storyteller. And Stemteemā is the storyteller. Her position in the narrative is almost that of a Greek chorus commenting on the action. By delineating the landscape of another time, she creates the context of history to which Cogewea must ultimately respond. Indeed, Mourning Dove emphasizes the importance of Stemteemā's stories by dramatically counterpointing them to the action of the narrative. In each instance, the appropriate ritual is observed as it would be in the oral storytelling context. Cogewea goes to the tepee and formally requests to hear a story; the aged woman meditates on her words while she smokes her pipe; and then she tells the story. Mourning Dove has plucked the oral tradition from its tribal context and placed it square in the novel.⁸ That she is aware of her role in transforming the oral tradition into written form is evident in Stemteemā's preface to her first story:

This story I am telling you is true. It was given me by my father who favored me among his many children. . . . He told me the tales that were sacred to his tribe; honored me with them, trusted me. Treasured by my forefathers, I value them. I know that they would want them kept only to their own people, if they were here. But they are gone and for me the sunset of the last evening is approaching and I must not carry with me this history.

(122)

As the Stemteemā must pass her stories on orally to those beyond the tribal circle, so has Mourning Dove assumed the responsibility for preserving those traditions in literary form for a wider audience.

What is most interesting is the way in which she has synthesized various elements from Okanogan culture to fit in with the dramatic

demands of the narrative. An example of this synthesis of traditions occurs in the first story Stemteemā tells, entitled "The Dead Man's Vision" in which a medicine man of the Okanogan had long ago prophesied the first coming of the white man, the "Black Robes" or missionaries. The time of year is winter and the people are celebrating the "Spirit's Days" to continue "His favors to the tribe; that the trees, the grass and herbs be perpetual; that the deer and all game be plentiful the coming season and that the red salmon again swim up the Swanitkqah" (123). In this description, Mourning Dove combines the two traditions of the Winter Dance and the First Fruit Ceremonies celebrated by the Okanogans. The Winter Dance was a time to pay homage to the spirits but not to the Great Spirit as much as to one's own individual spirit power. In a sense, the Winter Dance was a coming out party for new initiates to sing their Power songs, thus communicating to members of the tribe that they had successfully completed a power quest and obtained the power of a guardian spirit. The First Fruit Ceremonies, on the other hand, would have been performed in the spring to celebrate the rebirth of the land and the generation of new food supplies after the long winter.⁹

As the Stemteemā continues her story, she recounts the trance the "dead man" fell into for two days during which he received the vision of the future in which the whites would ultimately destroy the Indian way of life, but the first whites to come, the missionaries, would help them get to the spirit land. For this episode, Mourning Dove has drawn on the tradition in the Dreamer religion in which such doomsday messages were common and "of considerable antiquity," as Cline notes. But this story is also about the endurance of the oral tradition. Having received the story from her father who learned it from his father, Stemteemā says:

I know that it must be true, for my father never spoke the lie. He did not talk two ways. I have heard the old Indians in my childhood time wonder at the story. This is why the Black Robes were believed when they at last did come.

(127)

In contrast to the faith of the older generation of Indians is the skepticism of the younger Indians who think such tales are only chip-chap-tiquik or myths, and it is against their attitude that Stemteemä fights. Her second story of Green-Blanket Feet is a personal history of the tragedy that befell her best friend who married and was betrayed by a white man. Having escaped her evil husband with one of her children, she was captured and enslaved for a time by the Blackfeet. Her son died in their camp and she eventually escaped and returned to the Okanogan. Of her last journey, Green-Blanket Feet says,

When I reached my people, they were all glad to see me. My feet were bare except for the worn strips of my once fine four-point Hudson Bay blanket. This is why I am called by my tribe, "Green-Blanket Feet." The name connects me with the false tongued Shoyahpee of other moons. It is the strong, clinging memory--hated thing--which recalls the face of the one I once loved; whose words I believed. The blanket was his gift when I first went to him.

(176)

When Cogewea objects to the intent of her grandmother's story, defending her feelings for Densmore, Stemteemä replies,

The grandchild is not full Shoyahpee. She is only half! She must forget her white blood and follow after her Okanogan ancestors. To their women came no shame.

(177)

This theme of betrayal was apparently very close to Mourning Dove's heart because her own grandmother had been deserted by a white man. Ambivalent about her own white blood, she asks McWhorter at one point not to include any mention of it in his preface for Cogewea because she

doesn't want readers to credit her success as a writer to her white side. Of Green Blanket Feet's story, she simply comments in a letter to McWhorter that she was a "noted woman among the Colville" and exemplified the plight of the "unfortunate Indian woman."¹⁰

As Stemteemā exhausts her storytelling resources for turning Cogewea away from Densmore, she finally decides to consult the Sweat House, and it is in this sequence of events that Mourning Dove is especially successful in integrating Okanogan culture into the narrative. In Okanogan culture, the Sweat House was considered a diety and was consulted in matters ranging from love and war to success in hunting and gambling. The suppliant would cover a small pit with a cone-shaped structure of tightly bound poles, bark, and earth. Hot rocks were placed inside, over which the individual would sprinkle water to create steam to have his or her sweat. Bathing to purify and prepare the body to receive the full benefit of the Sweat House preceded and followed the ritual. In some versions of the naming myth and in the one Mourning Dove included in Coyote Stories, Sweat House is the wife of the Great Spirit; in others, Sweat House is the Great Spirit and is addressed as great grandfather. In Cogewea, Jim describes the Sweat House thusly:

My grandmother used to tell me the old tradition which says that the twelve sticks bent in the frame of the sweat house are the twelve ribs of the Spirit God, and that these here ribs can understand what you speak or sing to the gods.

(239-240)

Upon entering the sweat house, a ritual song is sung to invoke the aid of the diety after which individual petitions for aid are chanted.¹¹ To these details of the tradition, Mourning Dove is faithful, but what she introduces is the belief that the explosion of a hot rock is "a precursor of misfortune," while a wish made on a stone that is placed

without breaking inside the sweat house will come true.

There is no ethnographic evidence that Okanogans believed in this exploding rock theory. However, rocks did constitute a very important part of their culture, particularly for girls who, according to James Teit, would make circles of stones in which each represented a wish or a prayer of the girl.¹² Carrying the stones from some distance, the girl would pray for strength and endurance to carry her burdens in later life and then would specify what wish each stone represented as she placed it in the circle. By shifting the emphasis slightly, Mourning Dove has remained faithful to the tradition of wishing upon rocks and, at the same time, has created a tight dramatic device that works very effectively. Upon hearing her grandmother's invocation of the Sweat House Spirit, Cogewea goes to place one of the stones inside the house and make her wish, but at the last moment, the rock explodes into a million fragments, leaving her in anguish over the meaning of the event and effectively serving as an omen of the incumbent disaster that will befall her when she elopes with Densmore. But Jim and Mary have also participated in the ritual and their rocks do not explode, thus preparing the reader for the eventual happy outcome. As Jim successfully puts his rock in the circle, Mary exclaims,

"Oh! Jim! You are favored by the Spirit-god! The sweat house knows you are the one who made his body and warmed it, bringing life back into the form when only the bones of it were left; returning life to him who was once Chief of the Animal World; he who knows everything under the Sun-God. . . . We understand such things and believe them as only Indians can. Your wish will come true!"

(242)

But it is in the recurring motif of spirit power that Mourning Dove is most faithful to her Okanogan heritage. Jim knows that Cogewea will

win the horse race because his "spirit-power" has told him so. Stemteemā bases her judgment of Densmore upon the signs her "guiding spirits" have given her in her dreams. When Cogewea goes to her favorite haunt, she "makes medicine" over the buffalo skull. As Green-Blanket Feet escapes from the Blackfeet who have enslaved her, she calls on her "secret powers" for aid and is not abandoned by her "Spirit protector." Jim and Mary construct the sweat house for Stemteemā according to the "guidance of the spirits," and Cogewea senses from her "Indian Spirit" that she is "stepping wrong." When Jim informs Stemteemā that Cogewea has eloped with Densmore, the ancient grandmother already knows the truth revealed in her dream by the spirits and is singing the "spirit-song" of Soma-ash-hee. And finally, Cogewea realizes her deep love for Jim when her beloved buffalo skull "speaks" to her.

All of these examples are variations upon the Okanogan concept of power or Soma-ash-hee, which Mourning Dove describes as the "spirits' communication through an animal to a person either in a dream or vision. This . . . is not favored to all but to persons who have found that 'medicine' in their fasting time of life" (366).

Power for Okanogans was a form of personalized religion in that each individual who acquired power established a unique relationship with a guardian spirit through meditation and fasting. What is most unique about power is its auditory nature in that it usually comes to the person through a voice or song. According to one of Cline's informants, "a person never saw his guardian spirit, either in animal or human form, but only heard its song and its words of advice and command."¹³ This relationship could not be more accurately depicted than in the last chapter of Cogewea, "A Voice From the Buffalo Skull":

The fall of an unshod hoof on the stony ground and the jingle of spurs broke upon Cogewea's ears. She did not look up, but intuitively knew who the horseman was. Her eyes dropped to the old skull. She started visibly. Could she be deceived? A voice seemed to issue from its cavernous depths in the Indian tongue; a laudation of--

"The Man! The Man! The Man!

Then it was accusing; a plea of pity that such deep and honorable love should be requited with nothing more than insipid friendship. The voice ceased as suddenly and as mysteriously as it came.

(381-382)

Here, Mourning Dove has effectively fulfilled her wish to weave folklore into novel form, and the most fundamental belief of the Okanogans has been transformed into a viable plot element.

This, it seems, is the singular achievement of Cogewea, the attempt to translate the concepts of one culture to another through literary form. In a sense, Mourning Dove is herself the breed, standing between an Indian world that seems to be rapidly disappearing and a white world that is either indifferent or bent on government control of Indians. Her motivations are not unlike those of Zitkala Sa in that she wants to not only save that heritage that is slipping away, but also to present her way of life in a manner that is intelligible and acceptable. Given her insecurities about her education and her fear of being ridiculed, it is not surprising that she would turn to McWhorter with gratitude for his help in "fixing up" Cogewea. But it is the complexity and extent of their collaboration that makes it so difficult to render a final evaluation of the novel.

Even friends and critics of McWhorter and Mourning Dove had a difficult time assessing the novel. On the one hand, there is the view of Martha McKelvie who writes to McWhorter, saying,

There is no chance that anything bad would come of the world knowing that you practically wrote Cogewea . . .

In the field of all arts, interpreters are necessary. . . . I don't think there is much danger of the Dove being placed in the position of a charlatan. But I do think it would be safe to say on an inside page, "Translated by Shopowtan." Thus, if she ever had cause to meet people they would say, "Oh well--she does not say things so well in English" and let it go at that.

(365)

On the other hand, Granville Lowther writes to McWhorter, criticizing the use of unnatural language in parts of the novel and praising other sections:

The highlight of her story is the description of the races. There Mourning Dove is entirely at home. She knows her subject perfectly. Also the stories told by the old Indian Stemteemä are excellent. She knows that woman and the woman knows her so much better than either of them knows the Easterner. If Mourning Dove would confine her writings to the life she knows and the people she knows and understands, she should have a brilliant future as a writer. It is wonderful to be the first American Indian to write a book.

(401) June 16, 1928

And from William Brown, a lawyer from Okanogan, Washington, who subsequently helped Mourning Dove on the spelling of Okanogan words for Coyote Stories, comes this evaluation:

I was much impressed with the final suggestion of her taumannouwis, the buffalo skull, which spoke to her, advising as to the man she should marry. That idea is very Indian indeed, for I have heard Indians talk so much about the taumannouwis that the individual looked upon it as his special guardian angel, good fairy, or whatever you might call it. The buffalo apparently was hers.

(401) June 7, 1928

In the final analysis perhaps the most that can be said is that neither Mourning Dove nor McWhorter could have written the book without the other. Their collaboration was unique and all the more special because they were breaking new ground in bringing together two disparate traditions: the oral culture of the Okanogans with the literary form of

the western romance. Without question, the book is uneven, wrenched in parts, replete with clichés and unnatural language, but for all that, it does stand as the first effort of an American Indian woman to write a novel based upon the legacy of her Indian heritage, and for that alone, as well as for the preservation of those concepts and stories of Okanogan culture that surely would have disappeared, we must be grateful for Mourning Dove's aspirations and McWhorter's assistance.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

B.

COGEWEA, THAT "LITTLE SQUAW"

¹I have been unable to find out the reason for the different spellings of Cogewea. Throughout her correspondence with McWhorter, Mourning Dove spells the name "Cogeawea," but when the book was published, the spelling was standardized to Cogewea" throughout. I have used the published spelling in my comments and left McWhorter's and Mourning Dove's correspondence as it was. The excerpts quoted here are taken from letters in folders #366, 1547, and 392 respectively, in the McWhorter collection. Subsequent folder numbers will be included in the text.

²American Indian Fiction (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), p. 179. Larson discusses Cogewea in an appendix rather than in the main text of his book because of his "suspicion" that Mourning Dove worked with a collaborator rather than writing the entire book herself. However, he has done no research to justify his supposition or to discover the identity of Sho-pow-tan.

³In this same letter, McWhorter asks MacLean's advice about annotating the book and also comments on Mourning Dove's aversion to having her picture included:

She says that this would be alright for an historical work, but for fiction, she thinks it out of place. I have explained to her that hers is NOT fiction in the full sense of the word.

Please note as well that McWhorter spells her name "Morning" instead of "Mourning" because she had not yet discovered her error in spelling her name.

⁴Co-ge-we-a, The Half-Blood--A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range (Boston: Four Seas, 1927), p. 145. All subsequent page numbers will be included in the text.

⁵Apparently, McWhorter confided most often in Martha McKelvie, who was very interested in Indian affairs and signed most of her correspondence to McWhorter under the name of Ha-a-ka-wa-a. In the same letter in which she advises McWhorter about publishers, she says the following about Mourning Dove's language:

Good Lord! Why shouldn't a high class Indian use decent language? Why would it be a credit to the race for a book written by one of their members to be written in poor English? It is a fact, as all Indian students know, that the Indian is the only person outside of the English speaking races, who,

when he learns English, speaks it without the slightest accent. I have always believed people of good birth do things properly whether they are educated or not. If your Mourning Dove had received a fine education at the hands of the liberal government, they could point to her with pride and say, "See, here's one of our educated Indians" but, if, without an education, she can produce a manuscript that is criticised because the language is too high brow for an Indian, then her own people can point to her with pride and feel that she is proof of their innate ability. She would be a fool to couch her manuscript in crude, ignorant terms just to make it sound as a tender-foot thinks an Indian should sound.

⁶"A Stranger in My Own Life--Alienation in Native American Prose and Poetry: II," Association for the Study of American Indian Literature Newsletter, III, #2 (Spring, 1979), p. 16.

⁷"Okanagan Folk Play--An Animal Tale from the Inkameep Indian Reserve in British Columbia," The Carolina Play-Book XII, #4 (December, 1939), p. 154. This is the preface to the play that follows entitled "Little Chipmunk and the Owl Woman" which was recorded by Elizabeth Renyi (155-158). In the same volume are two other Okanagan tales that have been turned into plays: "Why the Chipmunk's Coat is Striped," pp. 109-110, and "Why the Ant's Waist is Small," pp. 111-112.

⁸For a discussion of storytelling among Okanogans, see Rachel S. Commons, "Diversions" in The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanogan of Washington, ed. Leslie Spier, General Series in Anthropology, #6 (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Co., 1938). According to Commons, Okanogans generally told stories only during the winter evenings because of the taboo against telling stories in the summer or during the day. Any one who broke the taboo would suffer from baldness. Old men and women were exempt from this taboo, however, because they were already bald, so Mourning Dove is well within Okanogan tradition in having Stemteemä tell stories during the summer days.

Men and women alike could tell stories. Stories generally ended with a variation of the phrase, "And then I came back" or with another formula in which the teller would spit into the sky and say "Rain a little; clear up again; get warm; Sun, shine and let the children play around outside."

⁹For a full discussion of the Winter Dance ceremony, see Walter Cline, "Religion and World View" in The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanogan of Washington, ed. Leslie Spier, General Series in Anthropology, #6 (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Co., 1938). Cline also discusses the First Fruit ceremonies as does C. Hill-Tout in "The Far West--The Home of the Salish and Dene," British North America - I (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907).

¹⁰It is interesting to note, however, that not all white men betrayed their Indian wives. In Ogopogo's Vigil--A History of Kelowna

and the Okanagan (British Columbia: Kelowna Branch, Okanagan Historical Society, 1966; original publication, 1948), Frank Buckland records the history of Dr. John McLoughlin, the Canadian Governor of the territory that would eventually become Oregon. In 1824, he married an Indian woman through the Hudson Bay Fur Company. When the missionaries arrived, they informed him that his marriage was illegal, so he went to the Justice of the Peace. This still did not satisfy the Catholic Church, so he and his Indian wife were married a third time by the church. Buckland also records the history of an Indian woman who married a white man and never came back to her tribe. Before she left, however, she gained a small measure of notoriety by becoming the first Indian to wear a Scottish Highland Tartan.

¹¹For a discussion of the importance of the Sweat House, see Cline (full reference at footnote 8); Rachel S. Commons, "Diversions," in The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanogan of Washington (full reference in footnote 8); Alexander Ross, "Fabulous Origin of the Oakinacken Indians," Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1849). The opening lines of the Sweat House prayer, according to Cline, are:

O! O! O! O! Sweat House
Take pity on me,
Let me live to be old.
Help me.

I have not been able to find any reference in the anthropological material to the Song of the Mountain Herb which Stemteemä sings in the Sweat House. According to C. Hill-Tout, it was common for Okanogans to invoke the Spirit of the Dawn. James Teit also corroborates this, particularly for girls and adolescents who prayed to the Day Dawn. See James A. Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus," ed. Franz Boas, 40th Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1927-28 (United States Government Printing Office, 1930). Most probably, then, the Song of the Mountain Herb is an imaginative version of the ritual song.

¹²Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus," 198-294.

¹³Cline, "Religion and World View," p. 139. For detailed discussions of the concept of Power, see Cline, C. Hill-Tout and Leslie Spier, "Tribal Distribution in Washington," General Series in Anthropology, #3 (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Co., 1936).

C.

COYOTE AND COYOTE STORIES

If Mourning Dove relied heavily on McWhorter's assistance in the writing of Cogewea, she had much more control over the material that would be published under the title of Coyote Stories (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1933).¹ From the inception of their friendship, McWhorter had encouraged Mourning Dove to gather as many of the traditional Okanogan folktales and myths as she could before they disappeared into oblivion with the death of the older storytellers (see Appendix B). Having begun his own collection of Yakima tales, McWhorter originally planned to publish a collection that could contain both Yakima and Okanogan folktales, but as he and Mourning Dove pursued their field work, it soon became apparent that the material from the two tribal traditions was too extensive for a single publication and lacked coherence because of the difference in cultural contexts. Unfamiliar with the Okanogan language and busy with his own collection, McWhorter left Mourning Dove to her own devices in collecting and writing the tales, offering to edit the language as she would complete a tale and remaining available to her for moral support and periodic assistance. They corresponded frequently over the fifteen-year period during which Mourning Dove collected the legends she always referred to as "folklores." When she had recorded a sufficient number of tales to be published, McWhorter arranged for Heister Dean Guie to edit the stories and provide illustrations. McWhorter again provided the notes to the

text. The result was the publication in 1933 of Coyote Stories, a collection of twenty-seven traditional Okanogan folk tales, eighteen of which center on the adventures of the peripatetic coyote.

The discussion of Coyote Stories is divided into three parts: Part One deals with the background to the writing of the tales and the interaction of Mourning Dove, McWhorter, and Guie; Part Two is a discussion of the relationship of Coyote to Okanogan culture and his particular place in Mourning Dove's collection; and Part Three is an analysis of several coyote stories in which Mourning Dove's original version is compared to Guie's edited version.

Having decided to follow McWhorter's advice, Mourning Dove took her responsibility for collecting and recording Okanogan tales very seriously, but the task was not to be without its personal toll on her energies, as she notes in a letter to MacLean, dated March 23, 1916:

The summer time is the best for collecting field material. Indeed I could hardly get about in the winter for such purpose. The supply is great and I have hardly touched the field. I want to make as complete a collection as possible. Indeed my hope is to make it the best tribal work ever written. To do this I do not think it best to rush into print without first having a tradition as complete as possible. Big Foot will tell you that it is very difficult to get an Indian myth in all of its parts at one sitting. Perhaps I have the advantage over him in knowing the language so well. He must depend on an interpreter and he says that often he has to go back and secure some point missed in the first narration. I do not have this trouble as he has it but I do have many other things to contend with. You have no idea just what it is to collect these old stories. But I am in it and I love the work and I want to preserve the sacred stories of my fast disappearing people.

(392)

One of Mourning Dove's biggest obstacles to collecting the stories was financial. She simply did not always have the money to track down an

Okanogan storyteller in British Columbia or on some remote part of the Colville reservation, since taking the time to do so away from her life as a migrant laborer meant economic loss. In addition, the Indians themselves were often suspicious of her reasons for wanting the tales and would demand payment, if they thought the tales were to be published, having become accustomed to payment by anthropologists such as James Teit. Some of the younger Indians ridiculed her intentions of preserving their tribal lore, while the older Indians, fearful of their children's scorn, refused to divulge their sacred traditions. All too frequently, Mourning Dove encountered Indians who had been so thoroughly demoralized by reservation life that they had given up any desire to hold on to their culture.

But not all of her encounters were discouraging, and Mourning Dove did hear and record "lovely folklores" from Toma, Old Jennie, Long Thresa, her parents--Joseph Quintasket and Lucy Stukin--, Big Lip, Cultus Charley, and others, many of whom had died before Coyote Stories was finally published. Her manner of recording the tales was to spend an evening with the storyteller, listening to the stories and then to sketch them out from memory when she returned home at night. If there seemed to be discrepancies in details of a given tale, she would seek as many versions of the story as possible and record the one that was most frequently told.

However, her problems did not end with finding a willing storyteller. She still had to translate the tales into English, since she and McWhorter had decided at the inception of the project to publish a "well written work in plain English [that] would meet with a recognized demand for pure native folklore stories." They had also decided, though,

to "retain many native words and names in every legend" so that Mourning Dove had to be as accurate about the Okanogan names as she was about the English translations. In one letter to Big Foot, she laments her dilemma with those "brain teasers," as she termed the Okanogan translations:

I have been rather handicapped concerning names of animals because many I know in the Indian dialect and may not know in English names. Then maybe I will know it in English while I am "stumped" on the Indian work.

March 22, 1930 (269)

Added to the problem of vocabulary was the difficulty of finding a phonetic translation in English that would render the correct sounds in Okanogan. As there was no standard dictionary of Okanogan words and the one attempt by priests to translate the Bible had failed, Mourning Dove had to turn to two white friends, a Mrs. Maude Manning and Judge William C. Brown, conversant in the language, for their help in writing the Okanogan names for the animal characters in the coyote stories.² After one of their meetings, Judge Brown writes to McWhorter, describing the problems in translation that he and Mourning Dove faced:

We couldn't make a success of writing out translations in the Indian language for the reason that the English alphabet is wholly incapable of reproducing Okanogan words. In the case of the Chippewa language, the Sioux language, or some others that I have been more or less familiar with, the English alphabet is quite sufficient for the purpose, but with the languages of the Saleesh stock there are some half a dozen or more sounds which are used so much that they appear in the great majority of the words, which cannot be reproduced in the letters of the English alphabet. We would have to add some half a dozen letters to the English alphabet in order to handle the Saleesh words. In other words, a new alphabet would have to be made for the purpose. I have puzzled over this matter of writing out Indian words for years and I know it is impossible to do with any degree of effectiveness.

February 7, 1930 (269)

And as if this were not enough, Mourning Dove also had to contend with the difficulty of discriminating the "pure" Okanogan words from the dialect that had sprung up among the confederated Colville tribes as a result of their close proximity to each other. In one instance, for example, she notes the similarity between the Okanogan word for white swan, "smilkameen," and the Colville word, "spak-ameen," lamenting the fact that her problems in writing "Indian" were doubly compounded by the confusion of dialects.

In her attempt to be as accurate as possible in her recording of the folktales, Mourning Dove was spurred on not only by her own sense of pride in her tribal traditions but also by the meticulous attention to detail of her editor, Heister Dean Guie. A journalist from Yakima and a friend of McWhorter's, Guie was eager to establish his reputation as an illustrator and an editor in his work on Coyote Stories, as he notes in a letter to McWhorter:

I remember you saying that Mourning Dove wanted to get away from any indication that her book was edited. I would like to have her change her mind (women do) so I could get some recognition for my future work. Get my monicker before the publishers. I do not think it would reflect on M. Dove as author of the legends, as so many books and magazine articles are handled in that way. That new book (out last year) "by" Standing Bear was edited by Brininstool, if I recollect correctly . . . The magazine articles, such as in the Sat. Eve. Post and Colliers frequently are represented as "By So-and-So, as Told to So-and-So," the last "So-and-So" being the boy who slapped the article in shape. Do you think Mourning Dove would agree to have it appear this way: "Collected and Written by Mourning Dove," "Edited by Mee-self."

July 19, 1930 (322)

Mourning Dove did, in fact, agree to Guie's receiving credit on the title page for editing and illustrating Coyote Stories. In addition to Coyote Stories, Guie also wrote Tribal Days of the Yakimas (1935)

and Bugle in the Valley--Garrett's Fort Simcoe (1956). With McWhorter, he provided a preface, notes, appendices, and illustrations to a reprint edition of Adventures in Geyser Land, originally published in 1878 by Frank D. Carpenter.

Despite her frustration over Guie's constant demand that she standardize spellings and verify certain Okanogan beliefs--at one point, for example, she notes that he has a "keen scent like a blood-hound for wrong words and mistakes"--Mourning Dove was more often than not grateful for his help, repeatedly expressing her appreciation to McWhorter that he and Guie had helped her so much in her "life's work." Of her relationship with Guie, she writes to McWhorter:

I am so poor in grammar and writing names that I dread to try, and the more that I try the worse I get with those infernal words in Indian, but I surely appreciate what Mr. Guie is doing for us. He is a severe teacher, but I have learned wonderfully since I had to study Indian words and their meanings.

May 19, 1930 (269)

Though she appreciated Guie's intentions, Mourning Dove could never warm up to him in practice, so McWhorter became the mediator between the two of them, passing on Guie's requests for authentication of Okanogan beliefs in language that Mourning Dove would accept. In one letter, for example, McWhorter writes:

You will see that Guie is extremely careful and painstaking with your legends. We should be glad for this, for I know, and he knows, that they will be sought after by scientific people, and we can not be too careful; and all the more so because you are an Indian, and it will be expected that you know what you are writing about, and we want to make you an authority on Okanogan lore.

May 3, 1930 (269)

Unfortunately, though, McWhorter and Guie could not always accept Mourning Dove as an authority, and they both tended to badger her

repeatedly for answers to the same questions, as if they were trying to trip her up. The one belief that they continually challenged her on was the mystic number of the Okanogans.³ In letter after letter, Mourning Dove insists that the number is three instead of four, as it is for many tribes, because that is the number of times that Fox must step over Coyote in order to bring him back to life. It is also the number of times that a medicineman "works" over his patient. And, in fact, with the exception of one comment by C. Hill-Tout, that is the number used in many of the Okanogan folktales in various collections. For example, in the naming myth in Coyote and the Colville, collected by Eileen Yanan, Coyote insists three times that Grizzly Bear give him his name, but Grizzly Bear refuses three times. And in the story of Coyote and the Blackfeet recorded by James Teit, Coyote defecates three times, seeking aid from his excrements to outwit the Blackfeet.⁴ But despite her consistent answers, Guie continued to press for verification after verification, leading Mourning Dove finally to write the following to McWhorter:

I think I am beginning to understand the ways of the Shoyappee [white man] after living in contact with them all these years. They are great for searching for knowledge and anything with mystery is never left unsolved by the white man if [he] can help it.

April 17, 1930 (269)

And so Mourning Dove, McWhorter, and Guie continued their curious triangular relationship. Mourning Dove would collect a tale and write it down as accurately as she could on her old typewriter, sometimes typing in a tent in the woods, other times writing on the top of her suitcase in a migrant work camp, rarely sitting at a desk. From Omak, Nespelem, and Spokane in Washington--Fairview and Okanogan Falls in

British Columbia--Jennings and Polson in Montana, she would write to McWhorter, sending him her tales. In turn, he would pass them on to Guie who would then edit the language, add transitions and dialogue, and attempt to standardize the spelling of the Okanogan names. Having compiled a list of questions on each tale for Mourning Dove to answer, Guie would write to McWhorter, who would pass the queries on to Mourning Dove, who would then answer Guie via McWhorter, and so on. The details covered in the correspondence are somewhat overwhelming. There are, for instance, easily fifteen letters devoted to the correct spelling of the name for the white-tipped eagle. The etymology of Okanogan dominates half that number, while debate over the mystic number takes place in innumerable letters. It is a tribute to Mourning Dove's devotion to her task that she had the patience to endure Guie's compulsive interrogation, but it is to his credit as well that he insisted on such meticulous accuracy.

As editor of the tales, Guie assumed the responsibility for "rephrasing some parts for smoothness," filling in dialogue, and providing definitions for Okanogan words. At the suggestion of some of the publishers that the tales be geared to a children's audience, Guie tried to tighten up the tales by eliminating some of the repetition that had been integral to the oral version of a given tale. He also drafted a preface to the book to go under Mourning Dove's name but deferred to the preface that she eventually wrote because it was "good stuff, much better than [his] attempt." And he suggested a change in title from the original "Okanogan Sweat House" she had used to indicate the mythic dimensions of the tales. After going through several possibilities, including variations on the word, Chip-chap-tiqulk, which means both

myth and animal people, Guie and Mourning Dove agreed on Coyote Stories as a title. As to the order of the tales, Guie deferred to Mourning Dove's suggestions in several letters that the naming myth be first and "The Arrow Trail" be the last or next to last in the collection. Both tales circumscribe the limits of the animal people. In the first tale, which is similar to an origin myth, the animals are named and given their functions in the scheme of things. In the latter, the animal people try to leave their world to explore a new kingdom, but are quickly reminded of the dimensions of their province. Beyond these two concessions, Guie reordered many of the tales according to the table of contents Mourning Dove had submitted under the original title of Okanogan Sweat House.⁵

Guie's most influential role as editor, perhaps, was in devulgarizing Mourning Dove's collection, eliminating at least ten tales from the final manuscript that are frank explorations of such delicate subjects as incest, transvestism, and infanticide. In his collection published under the title Tales of the Okanogans, Donald Hines has retrieved those stories from Mourning Dove's manuscripts in the McWhorter collection and restored the tales as closely as possible to Mourning Dove's original language.

But the version of Coyote Stories published in 1933 conformed to notions of taste and decorum shared by Mourning Dove, McWhorter, and Guie. Though Mourning Dove does make a strong case for including all of the stories, "whether interesting or not," so that they may be "preserved for the coming generation of Indians," she admits that she has "purposely omitted a lot of things" that she considers objectionable to the reading public, knowing that the Indians will be able to

"read between the lines just the same." It is ironic that McWhorter, who had urged Mourning Dove to be as accurate as possible in collecting the tales, was unable to accept the content of some of them. To his objections, Mourning Dove responds in a typically conciliatory fashion:

You know what is best in the story "Coyote Marries His Own Daughter." That is a good story with only that one objection. Why not make it his daughter-in-law which [it] may have been. Send those four stories that you do not want. It seems that we can tell a little lie and write them differently so that Coyote would not be so blamed degraded a character. It is best that we should preserve all those stories for the future race of people.

February 23, 1929 (1505)

And in another letter, she says to McWhorter:

I am sending you back the legends; they are fine. I took note that you made some wonderful changes in not revealing how ornery our hero Coyote is. That is more readable and if Indians wish to keep the old way of preserving the story, they are at liberty to do so. The ugly way.

June 8, 1930 (269)

In seeking to portray Coyote in a manner acceptable to the reading public, McWhorter and Mourning Dove were unconsciously dealing with the problem of context. Plucked from his cultural domain among the Okanogan, Coyote's behavior by itself would seem bizarre, irrational, obscene, and might, Mourning Dove feared, reflect on the Okanogans themselves. On the other hand, without the stories, Coyote could disappear altogether. For the early American Indian writers, this conflict between a desire to present the Indian in the best light and simultaneously to preserve the traditions as accurately as possible creates ambivalence in the writer about his or her material. Forced as well to gear their tales to a children's audience, it's easy for the writers to oversimplify the tales, eliminating anything of a violent or vulgar nature. While

Mourning Dove insists on recording all the stories in a tradition, she is also conscious of modifying Coyote's behavior to make him more acceptable.

Credibility is the issue here and ironically what is credible within the oral tradition of a viable culture may not be credible when transformed to another genre. That is, a story out of context may collapse into a vacuum, if the writer does not take pains to articulate the silent understandings of a given group. In providing his notes to the stories, McWhorter attempted in part to place the stories in their proper cultural space. But it is in the Foreword to Coyote Stories, written by Chief Standing Bear, that the significance of the collection is underlined. Applauding Mourning Dove's efforts because storytelling is among Indians a celebration of the "history" and "literature," the "inherited traditions" of a people, Chief Standing Bear says:

These stories are valuable. They will continue to grow more valuable as the years go by, for through the few snatches of recorded song and story the spirit of the Indian will live and breathe, and though the figure of the American Indian passes forever from the stage of life, the spirit is imperishable.

(6)

Part II

To the Okanogans, Mourning Dove's tribe, Coyote is the most important figure in their cultural tradition. His position as ancestor to the Okanogans and trickster/culture hero is established in the Naming Myth in which the Great Spirit names all of the animals. In this tale, Coyote wants to be either Grizzly Bear, Eagle, or Salmon, and to be assured of such, he tries to stay awake all night long to be

the first in line for names. Instead, he falls asleep and is last. Although no one else wants his name, the Spirit Chief makes him the leader of all the animals and gives him the power to kill the monsters that are inhibiting the coming of the New People, the Indians. Despite his base and vulgar characteristics, Coyote is charged with establishing social and natural order in the universe. However, lest the base side of Coyote be forgotten, his power to transform circumstances ironically resides in his excrements. In his description of Coyote, related to him by older tribal members of the Okanogan, the anthropologist James Teit writes:

Coyote was sent by Chief to set the world in order. Chief saw that the people were having a hard time and were preyed upon by many evil beings. They were about to be killed off. Chief did not want the people to be exterminated, so he sent Coyote to help them. He endowed him with great magical power, so that he could surmount all obstacles. He gave him power to transform evil beings, and he gave him wisdom and cunning. He also gave to Coyote's excrement the power to be his friends and advisers. He told him to travel all over the world and set it right. Coyote had to travel much and to work hard. Chief said that when Coyote's work was finished, he would meet him, see his work, and then give him a rest.⁶

In the ethnographic material on the Okanogan, Cline, Boas, and Teit all cite examples of Coyote consulting his feces for help when he is in trouble.⁷ Very often, he actually engages in debate with them when they scold him for getting into trouble or calling upon them too much. To such mutinous behavior, Coyote always reacts with anger and threatens to drown his excrement in water or to pound them to death. In one of the tales, Coyote actually kicks his dung around until it obeys him. Coyote's special power is called Squ-stenk, and he is the only one who possesses such power. The other animals have shoo-mesh power, including Fox, Coyote's brother, who can bring Coyote back to life by stepping over him three times.

Since Coyote has been charged by the Spirit Chief with such an awesome responsibility as setting the world in order, it is not surprising that a majority of Okanogan folktales center on his adventures. In Mourning Dove's collection, he figures in eighteen of the twenty-seven tales. In her preface to Coyote Stories, Mourning Dove says this of Coyote:

The Animal People were here first before there were any real people.

Coyote was the most important because, after he was put to work by the Spirit Chief, he did more than any of the others to make the world a good place in which to live. There were times, however, when Coyote was not busy for the Spirit Chief. Then he amused himself by getting into mischief and stirring up trouble. Frequently he got into trouble himself, and then everybody had a good laugh--everybody but Mole. She was Coyote's wife.

My people called Coyote Sin-ka-lip, which means Imitator. He delighted in mocking and imitating others, or in trying to, and, as he was a great one to play tricks, sometimes he is spoken of as "Trick Person."

(7)

In selecting Okanogan Sweat House as the original title for her collection of tales, Mourning Dove was conscious of emphasizing an aspect of the fundamental belief system of the Okanogans that she hoped to communicate to her readers, because the Sweat House is a deity occupying a sacred place within Okanogan culture.⁸ That emphasis is brought into focus even more clearly in the change in title to Coyote Stories, since Coyote is the culture hero in possession of a rare power which he uses to both benefit mankind and to extract himself from the often disastrous consequences of his own cleverness. The intimate relationship between Coyote and his power, or Squ-stenk, acts as an archetype for the power relationship with animals that Okanogans sought in their puberty ceremonies. As power for them was a sacred key to establishing harmony

with the natural universe, so too is power crucial to all of Coyote's activities.⁹ He cannot transform himself at will, as Iktomi seems to do, but must seek always the aid of an outside agent that paradoxically comes from within him in order to work his tricks for good or for ill. Power is something to be possessed but it can and does reside within the individual. The particular identification of power with animals is inextricably linked to the mythic structure of Okanogan culture, as Mourning Dove explains in one letter:

When the animal world was in progress, the animals of today were supposed to be in the intermediate of man and an animal . . . It seemed that these half animal people knew all the time that [at] some later date a Creation of Man would come to them like the Messiah of the Whiteman, and when the day came, the Great Spirit created man, and the speech of the animals [was] forbidden. And yet these spirits of the animals come and give power to the Indians of today.

February 18, 1929 (526)

Animals become the personal totems, the symbols of manitou or power, for individuals; they are also the principal characters in the mythic stories that have evolved that account for the order of the universe inhabited by the Okanogans. And of the animals, Coyote is the greatest because he pushes back the limits of every situation he encounters to reveal what is possible. If Coyote can't do it, it can't be done. But Coyote can't "do it" without his power, of which Mourning Dove says:

This power of Coyote's, Squ-stenk, is a power belonging only to Coyote and I find that it is his individual power which is found to belong to no other animal . . . In all the searches of folklore I find the word to be used only for the power of Coyote.

November 22, 1921 (365)

Beyond this statement, Mourning Dove is not more specific about the nature of Coyote's power, though her frequent references to his

vulgar and degraded character suggest that she was fully aware of the substance of his power but did not choose to communicate that to McWhorter and Guie.

What is, perhaps, more to the point anyway is the dialectic between Coyote and his power, which serves as a model for individual possession of personal power, and here Mourning Dove has fulfilled her own mandate to make the tradition of Coyote stories as complete as possible. All of the coyote stories serve in some way as metaphors of order, or symbols of the fundamental tenets of Okanogan philosophy. In the naming myth, Coyote is introduced as the culture hero charged by the Spirit Chief to set the world in order, and is endowed with *squ-stenk* to accomplish his mission.

In each of the stories that follows, Coyote explores and often exploits the dimensions of his power. In the story of "Fox and Coyote and Whale," he takes a neutral role of the observer, lending his support to Fox when the latter attempts to rescue his stolen wife from the whale monster. Coyote does not have to summon his power because Fox successfully uses his own resources to recapture his wife and her love.

In "Coyote Fights Some Monsters," on the other hand, Coyote is cast in the role of monster-slayer and must repeatedly call upon his power to assist him in imposing order on the world. The first monster Coyote encounters is Horse, "a dangerous monster, and . . . much bigger than . . . any horse today." As Coyote is chased across the plains, he becomes scared and yells, "*Squas-tenk!* . . . Do something for me!" His power responds immediately by making three trees for Coyote to escape into, but Horse successfully kicks each tree down. After the third tree is about to be felled with Coyote clinging desperately to

it, Coyote cries, "Oh, Sin-za-caw-ha, wait! . . . I am not ready to die. Before you kill me, let me smoke my pipe." During his brief reprieve, Coyote again calls upon his "medicine" which gives him a whip and with that he leaps on the back of the horse-monster and begins to beat him into submission. This particular episode reveals the general pattern of Coyote's behavior. He always calls on his power when he is frightened and in trouble, which suggests an equation between power and survival, because, without his power, Coyote would be killed many, many more times than he is. However, when he calls upon his power for help, he never knows what it will present to him, so his survival also depends upon his imaginative and immediate use of the resources given to him by his power. In other words, power has no existence without the cooperation of the one who invokes it. Power must also be directed toward a specific end, which, in this episode, is the domestication of the horse. The episode also introduces the important ritual of smoking the pipe before all major events because one is given the time to formulate a decisive plan in tranquility. Impulsive action will not yield a successful result as will thoughtful action. After Coyote has beaten down the horse, he says,

From this sun you are for people to ride . . . Only when first ridden will you buck and be mean. Even old men will be able to sit on you. And old women will use you for carrying their camp things. On you they will put their heavy packs of roots and berries and meat.

(43)

Thus, Coyote sets the world in order. In this same story, he goes on to domesticate the dog, to turn man-eating trees into fuel sources for the Indians, to explain why babies are small and helpless creatures, to instruct Indians in the building of bridges across the mouths of

canyons, and to transform the elk-monster into a food supply for the Indians. In each episode, Coyote invokes his power to assist him, and after conquering each monster, he explains its future role in the scheme of things.

But Coyote's actions are not always heroic. Some things in the universe are the result of Coyote's greedy and foolish behavior like the absence of buffalo west of the Rockies. Like Iktomi, Coyote is always wandering, sometimes with a purpose, often in search of food or mischief. In "Coyote and the Buffalo," Coyote stumbles upon the skull of Old Buffalo Bull and, remembering his fear of that fierce creature, capriciously decides to defile the skull by kicking and spitting upon it. It's interesting that in the majority of the ethnographic versions of this story, and in Mourning Dove's original version, Coyote urinates on the skull, but Guie edited out that particular vulgarity from Coyote's behavior, though Coyote's actions are sufficient to bring Buffalo Bull back to life. A chase ensues, Coyote invokes his power for help, and as he is about to be captured, he again requests permission to smoke his pipe. At that point, another dimension is added to the tale. Buffalo Bull is really not angry at Coyote but at Young Buffalo who has taken away all of his wives. To get them back, he needs new horns. Coyote offers to make the horns for him, but when he calls on his power, "it [scolds] him for getting into trouble, but it [gives] him a flint knife and a stump of pitchwood" from which to carve the new horns. In payment for his successful defeat of Young Buffalo, Buffalo Bull gives Coyote one of his wives and cautions him not to kill her but just to slice off pieces of her flesh for food and to rub the wound with ashes which will heal it immediately. Coyote, of course, becomes bored

after a brief time with just her flesh and decides to kill her to enjoy her other parts. As soon as he does this, he loses her and when he returns to the herd for another cow, he is surprised to see the one he has just killed. She refuses to return to him and Buffalo Bull will not give him another cow. Thus, "Coyote had to return to his own country without a buffalo. That is why there never have been any buffalo along the Swah-netk-qhu."

Coyote loses the food supply because of his greed in wanting more than he needs and because he breaks the contract he has made with Buffalo Bull. He also fails to observe the proper respect for the dead when he comes across Buffalo Bull's skull. Though his power bails him out of trouble, he is reprimanded for his foolishness and made to pay for his misdeeds. In this story, Coyote instructs through his negative example, dramatically illustrating the importance of keeping one's word because, without contracts that work, the social order cannot be maintained.

Coyote is also responsible for the geographical landscape of the Okanogan, as Mourning Dove describes in the story, "Why the Flint Rock Cannot Fight Back," in which Coyote's deeds account for the "Square Butte," a rock monument in Cascade County, Montana. Coyote's success in this story depends upon his power transforming itself into a dense and foul mist which conceals his action from view. This device of a fog emanating from Coyote's power and covering up all action is used in several stories, suggesting that not all phenomena in the universe can be readily explained, even in metaphor.

In all of the stories, there are recurring motifs: Coyote forgets a rule or deliberately breaks a contract, upsetting the social order

and losing whatever he has gained; Coyote is hungry and always in search of food in his travels; Coyote offends by his mockery of others and his failure to observe rules of decorum and the sanctity of ritual. No matter how outrageous his behavior though, Coyote is always a source of great humor and a symbol of what is so very human in everyone. His attempts at greatness are always undermined at the last moment by his human failure. In the tale of "The Gods of the Sun and the Moon," for example, Coyote volunteers to become the Sun, a noble task, but as soon as he is in the sky, he is so fascinated by all that he observes below him that he starts gossiping about everyone, revealing all the secrets of those who have tried to hide their behavior from the light of day. But there are times when Coyote fulfills the charge of the Spirit Chief and prepares the way for the coming of the New People. In "Porcupine Learns the Sun Dance," Coyote kills the flies who have captured the Sun Dance so that he may teach that ritual to the New People.

Whether he is disguising himself as a beautiful woman to steal Badger's food supply or juggling his eyes like Chickadee to experience a new sensation, Coyote is responsible for the way things are. Through both his positive and negative example, he is the model for right action and most particularly for the proper relationship to power. Each object Coyote receives from his power can be found in the natural world, suggesting that power symbolizes man's capacity for envisioning his interdependence with nature. Survival depends upon understanding the infinite resources within the self and within nature and establishing a harmonious balance between these sources of power. And though Coyote instructs through exaggeration, he has survived and that, it seems, accounts for the enduring nature of the coyote stories.

Part III

In a discussion of "chip-chap-tiulk," or Indian myths of the animal world, Mourning Dove makes two very interesting observations about the relationship between the oral and written traditions. She says that

Coyote lost his power through his evil powers, and with it went the power of reading signs (which is a paper writing knowledge), and only picture writing was left.

no date (1505)

And

it is believed that the Animal World and man ruled, and after so long, the generation of man came to stay, and the Great Spirit gave the Indian his powers through the medium of animals, while he gave the whiteman his powers through paper, where he gains his knowledge of today.

(1505)

The implications of these statements are rather extraordinary. It would seem that the power of the white man resides in his ability to record his history, whereas the Indian's power depends upon a relationship with the natural world that can barely be sustained within the context of a rapidly shrinking reservation system in which alienation from one's personal animal totem is surely inevitable. And the reason that Indians don't have "paper power" is because of the evil behavior of their ancestor and culture hero, the notorious Coyote, whose stories ironically must be preserved in order to perpetuate the culture. In writing down the legends of her people, Mourning Dove is thus conscious of entering the foreign domain of the written word, which for her is not the most comfortable medium for expressing the tradition. Writing should be reserved for fiction, rather than sacred truths which can only be passed on orally among people who trust each other and share the

same system of values. That Mourning Dove struggled with the morality of writing down the coyote stories is evident in her original preface to Okanogan Sweat House which did not appear in the 1933 publication of Coyote Stories. The preface is quoted in full in Appendix C, but a few passages bear repeating here. Because of her great reluctance to commit what might be regarded as "irreverent sacrilege" in the writing down of the legends, Mourning Dove says:

To He-mene Ka-wan, the "silvery-hued" Yakima--as in vision--was revealed my duty in rescuing from oblivion the Legend-Bundles being borne by the aged Okanogans over the Trail of Shadows to the Night of Sleep. This determined me to join with him as a co-worker in the field of tribal legends, and to forego a dream of weaving this folk-lore into novel and romance form.

With this resolution formed, my sole ambition has been to depict the stories as nearly as practical in their original dressing.

(1506)

Only a vision could convince her of the significance of her work, though she had independently pursued her personal goal of writing fiction. Because of her feelings about the sanctity of the oral tales she was writing down, Mourning Dove, unlike Zitkala Sa, did not attempt to shape the tales in any way, but rather left that task to Heister Dean Guie.

The first major change that Guie made in Mourning Dove's original manuscript was to insert framing devices in the stories, abandoning the traditional Okanogan opening that usually finds Coyote, like Iktomi, out traveling somewhere. For example, Mourning Dove's opening paragraph for the story of "Coyote and Buffalo" reads as follows:

One day Coyote was walking along a prairie country where he could see no trees, and as he came to a flat, he saw an old buffalo skull grey with age. As he saw the bones lying about he thought of the times

when the buffalo bull was alive and how he feared him, and now that he was dead and helpless, he was going to take his revenge and make sport of his bones . . .

Guie, on the other hand, opens the story thusly:

No buffalo ever lived in the Swah-netk-qhu country. That was Coyote's fault. If he had not been so foolish and greedy, the people beside the Swah-netk-qhu would not have had to cross the Rockies to hunt the "quas-peet-za" (curly hairs).

What is taken for granted in the oral tradition--that is, that Coyote's behavior inevitably accounts for the way things are--must be articulated in the written tradition. And in this case, Guie uses the framing devices for the tales to not only state their didactic purpose but to lend them credibility as well. There are two points of view operating at all times in Guie's edited version--one that presumably reflects the Okanogans' angle of vision and one that is Guie's perspective which serves to reassure the reading audience that the Okanogans did indeed know the "meaning" of their stories. For Mourning Dove, of course, it's unnecessary to explain anything. The stories just are, which is why she is so hesitant to commit them to paper because they lose their life somehow when they are trapped on a page without the communal force of the storytelling context breathing through them.

For Mourning Dove and the Okanogans, Coyote is, of course, wicked, and one of the functions of the coyote stories is to give vent to repressed anti-social desires. In the same story, Mourning Dove describes Coyote's desecration of Buffalo Bull's skull:

Coyote laughed and threw the old skull in the air, made his water on it, in its eye sockets and nose, and he spit on it, until he grew tired. Satisfied with his mischief, he went down the trail.

As has already been noted, Guie edits this passage, presumably to make it more acceptable for a children's audience, writing,

He picked up the skull and threw it into the air; he kicked it and spat on it; he threw dust in the eye-sockets. He did these things many times, until he grew tired. Then he went his way.

(63-64)

Though Guie does not alter the narrative line in Mourning Dove's manuscript, he does develop the action by adding descriptive passages. For example, in the same story, Mourning Dove's version of Coyote's plea to his power to help him escape the reincarnated Buffalo Bull is the following:

Coyote called to his manitou powers, and there grew three trees, and he climbed up, but this didn't stop Buffalo. He started to cut the tree down with his horn. At last the first tree fell and Coyote took to the second tree and that soon fell too and he went to the last one, but he soon saw that was not going to last, so he begged Buffalo to stop a moment while he talked to him.

Guie edits the passage to read:

"Oh, Squas-tenk, help me!" Coyote begged, and his power answered by putting three trees in front of him. They were there in the wink of an eye. Coyote jumped and caught a branch of the first tree and swung out of Buffalo's way. Buffalo rammed the tree hard, and it shook as if in a strong wind. Then Buffalo chopped the trunk with his horns, first with one horn and then the other. He chopped fast, and in a little while over went the tree, and with it went Coyote. But he was up and into the second tree before Buffalo Bull could reach him. Buffalo soon laid that tree low, but he was not quick enough to catch Coyote, who scrambled into the third and last tree.

(64)

What is interesting about these two passages is that within the oral tradition, it appears that the action is sufficient unto itself, whereas in the written version, it is necessary to describe the action. That is, the Okanogans would know that Coyote would "beg" his powers for help because he is cowardly. And because Coyote's power is magical, it would surely help him in "the wink of an eye." And, of course, every-

one has seen a buffalo "ram" a tree so "hard" that it "shook as if in a strong wind," and so forth. It seems that the economy of expression within the oral tradition is directly attributable to the shared knowledge of the tribe. And because that knowledge is shared, individual storytellers cannot tamper with the truth. That is, to add one's personal embellishments beyond gestures and voice intonations to a sacred tradition must have been suspect at the very least and certainly to write those traditions down for a larger audience outside the tribal circle bordered on heresy. This may, in part, explain the ambivalence of Mourning Dove's attitude toward her task of writing "folklores." While she wanted to keep the tradition as authentic as possible, she was also somewhat reluctant to expose everything to the white world, so if Guie and McWhorter wanted to alter some of the "facts," she could agree knowing that the Indians would still, hopefully, possess the truth.

Another major influence that Guie had on the tales was in including Okanogan words for the names of the animal characters. With the exception of the story entitled "The Origin of Monquito" which her mother told her every night during her childhood, Mourning Dove does not include Okanogan names in her manuscript, which may account for the volume of correspondence on Okanogan words; that is, Guie apparently decided with each story which names should be included and then requested the Okanogan words from Mourning Dove. Guie also suggested that the names of the original storytellers be included as well to lend authenticity to Mourning Dove's stories. This she happily consented to, though it was difficult to remember everyone because so many of the storytellers had died by the time she and Guie were working on the final manuscript.

It is, perhaps, in the shaping of the tales that Guie's editorial hand is most heavily felt. Within the oral tradition, many tales are largely episodic with one episode loosely connected to the next simply through the character of Coyote. As with Iktomi, it is enough that Coyote travels about sticking his nose into things, so his actions do not have to be logical or motivated. One adventure yields to the next and that is the way it is. The one story in Mourning Dove's manuscript replete with such loosely related episodes is entitled by her "The Arrow Ladder to Heaven." Guie changed the title to "The Arrow Trail" in Coyote Stories, and in Tales of the Okanogans, edited by Donald Hines, it appears as "The Arrow Trail to the Upper World Land." In Mourning Dove's original manuscript, there are seven episodes, the longest of which is the last one and the title episode. Briefly, the episodes are the following:

1. Coyote meets Chickadee and insults him by criticizing his arrows that are short and stubby. Chickadee retaliates by killing Coyote with his magic arrow.
2. Fox finds Coyote, steps over him, and brings him back to life. He then admonishes Coyote for his mischievous behavior. [Note: Coyote always thinks he's just been asleep when he's been dead.]
3. Coyote seeks revenge on Chickadee and forces him to gamble away his arrows and clothes.
4. Coyote puts on Chickadee's clothes and comes upon a teepee full of prairie chicken children whom he kills.
5. Mother and Father Prairie Chicken pursue Coyote and seek their revenge on him by throwing him off a cliff.
6. As Coyote falls off the cliff, he changes himself into various things from a leaf to a pine needle but at the last minute, he makes a mistake and becomes a rock, crashing to the bottom of the water where he seeks the aid of the water bugs. For their help, he gives them colorful coats to wear.
7. After returning to his normal shape, Coyote continues to the spot where the animal people have gathered and are planning their ascent to the next world. There are several adventures centered on the ascent and return to the animal world.

In the 1933 publication, Guie included the first six episodes in the story "Coyote and Chickadee" and entitled the last episode "The Arrow Trail." It's unlikely that such a division would have been made in the oral version of the tale because the whole point of the story is how Coyote gets waylaid by his own mischief from the serious purpose of meeting at the animal council to plan the ascent to the upper world. As with so many of the coyote stories, this tale centers on the nature of communal responsibility and holding up one's end of the bargain. If all of the animals are as capricious as Coyote, what will happen to the social order?

Though Guie did insert explanatory messages into the tales and alter the episodic structure of the oral versions to look more like short stories with a beginning, middle, and end--and though he did breathe description into the narrative skeleton and edit the language in places to sound "proper," it is to his credit that he did not do more. In letter after letter to McWhorter, he checks and doublechecks the facts of a story, verifies the proper Okanogan names for animals and plants, and confirms the authenticity of Okanogan beliefs. Though it's legitimate to object to his editorial control over the tales, it must be remembered that Mourning Dove wrote them down and sent them to McWhorter with the expectation that Guie would "get them in shape." The oral tradition was already passing out of existence among the Okanogans when Mourning Dove began her collection which meant that any effort she made to pass on the tales, no matter how altered their final version might be, was considered not only better than nothing but a major contribution. A constant theme in her letters is that "the younger generation of Indians has purposely forgotten the belief of their ancestors, of their

people." Standing between the old storytellers and the skeptical younger generation, Mourning Dove was in a unique position to capture a last echo of her tribe before their voices faded completely away. And with such an important mission to perform, it is easy to imagine that she would have wanted the tales of her people to appear in the best form possible and was, therefore, more than grateful for the assistance of Guie and McWhorter. What is a shame, perhaps, is that Mourning Dove did not trust her own voice more because there is a clarity and simplicity in her style that may come closest to the oral tales she heard as a child and collected from her people. Unconscious of a need to fix the tales in a specific geographical or cultural region beyond what is implicit in the story itself, and innocent of sophisticated notions of narrative structure, Mourning Dove achieves a timelessness in her own version of the tales that transcends the limitations of genre and gives us a brief glimpse into the cultural space inhabited by the Okanogans, descendants of Coyote. I've included the following brief tale to let Mourning Dove speak for herself.

Coyote as a Beautiful Woman

One day Coyote and his brother Fox were living alone in their teepee and were very hungry. They hunted and hunted without any success, each day failing as the rest. At last Fox gave up hope and he left Coyote for another country to hunt food.

Coyote stayed home and schemed, eating everything he could find from insects to leaves. At last he got an idea of what would bring him food. He lived close to a great encampment of people who hated him, and he decided to fool the people and get some food.

There was among the encampment a dashing young warrior whose name was Badger, and he killed much game, and he lived with his four maiden sisters who loved him dearly. He was generous and gave all the poor people meat from his killing, and all the old people wished him for a

son-in-law, but he never fancied any of the maidens of his people. He wished to find one in a faraway country.

One day when his sisters went for their daily bath, they found a beautiful strange woman sitting by the river painting her face with fine paints of many colors. They didn't know that this woman was the notorious Coyote turned into a beautiful woman by his powers. They spoke kindly to her and invited her to come to their teepee, with the hope that their warrior brother would accept her. When Badger reached home from the hunt, he was much attracted by the strange woman. He invited her to his special seat in the big teepee, which was a sign that he had proposed to her. She accepted shyly, and that night she refused to sleep with him, and she insisted that she must bring home four loads of food to her parents before she could accept him as a husband, and at each trip, his sisters must accompany her with packs of dried meats for her aged parents. To this Badger gladly consented, and the following day, the five women packed loads to the teepee of Coyote. He made the sisters wait while he went into the teepee along with the food on the pretense that his parents didn't wish to see strange people. And he would pretend he was talking to his parents and would imitate the speech of old people.

When Coyote had enough food stored away, he ran away from his sister-in-laws, turning himself back to the coyote that he was, and to save their brother's pride the sisters kept the secret hid. But a few days later when Badger went to the sweat-house with the men, as he drew near, he heard them saying,

"There comes the handsome proud Badger,
who refused the good women of his people,
who had Coyote for a wife. We do not wish
to sweat-house with him."

This made Badger very ashamed, and he humbled himself to his people and took a wife from among them, after chasing away Coyote from his country. He has been humble ever since among the animals.

While one might lament Guie's editorial influence, the publication of Coyote Stories in 1933 was unquestionably a major event, because it introduced into the public imagination the concept that Indians did indeed have a long and rich cultural tradition of distinct literary merit that was as "American" as anything white Americans had written. The reviews were singularly laudatory and have been cited in detail in

Appendix D, but it's worth quoting part of one here because the reviews were probably as influential as Mourning Dove's collection in opening the way for other Indian writers to treat their tribal backgrounds as literature. From the Daily Oklahoman, Kenneth Kaufman writes the following on January 14, 1934:

I have just finished reading a series of Indian legends "Coyote Stories," written by an Okanogan Indian woman named Mourning Dove, with some editing by Heister Dean Guie . . . which interested, charmed and amused me; and which started me to thinking. And the thinking is to my mind much more important than the interest, charm or amusement. For Oklahoma, with its thousands of Indians, has the greatest wealth of Indian legends within its borders of all the states, and with the possible exceptions of E. E. Dale's "Tales of the Tepee" (D. C. Heath & Co.) and S. M. Barrett's collections (Harlow Publishing Co.), it has utterly neglected this literary treasure. Some day our grandchildren are going to call us a set of blockheads for not collecting and publishing these tales. And to the next generation of Indians this neglect is going to mean the loss of a spiritual heritage which can never be replaced. The old Indians who know these stories, and every tribe has them, will not be here long. Somebody ought to do something about it.

These stories of Mourning Dove's are, as the title indicates, animal stories; they bear some resemblance to Uncle Remus's yarns and they are full of folk wisdom, which the real folk love to put into the mouths of animals, of a joy and a zest in living which creative literature sadly needs. And again, some of them have a sense of form which places them almost in the same rank with Greek myths. The coyote is to the plains Indian what the rabbit was to Uncle Remus--he is tricky, shrewd, sometimes a little too shrewd, and he generally comes out on top. Primarily of course these stories will appeal to children, but they will also appeal to the anthropologically minded adult who is either ignorant enough or sophisticated enough to appreciate one of the highest forms of art--the art that springs directly from the earth.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

C.

COYOTE AND COYOTE STORIES

¹All subsequent references will be from this edition and page numbers will be included in the text.

²For references on Okanogan language, see George Gibbs, "Vocabulary of the Okinaken," Contributions to North American Ethnology, 1 (1877), 248-264.

Of the two people who helped Mourning Dove with her spelling of Okanogan words, there is no information available on Mrs. Maude Manning beyond the references to her in Mourning Dove's letters. William Compton Brown (1869-1963) was a judge in Okanogan county and author of Early Okanogan History--1811-1911 (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1968) and The Indian Side of the Story (Spokane, Washington: C. W. Hill Printing Co., 1961). Though he was devoted to Indian affairs, Mourning Dove thought he was often too didactic about matters he had no direct knowledge of. They frequently argued about Okanogan words, but Mourning Dove usually deferred to him because of his autocratic manner.

³In one letter dated April 30, 1930, Guie writes to McWhorter, saying, "I hope Mourning Dove makes real sure on that mystic number business and doesn't just say it's "3" to have it different from other tribal legends. Tell her to make sure. I would rather erase where necessary and put in the correct number than to have it go out wrong and draw criticism from some of the ethnologists. Of course I hope it is "3" but don't tell her that."

Then on May 3, 1930, McWhorter writes to Mourning Dove: "Neither Guie nor myself are fully satisfied with that question of mystic number among the Okanogans. While I have all confidence in your judgment, we want the number verified beyond any probability of mistake. You see there will be ethnologists who will read your book critically, and should it be discovered that the number is five instead of three, it would be ruinous to you as an authority. We want you to see different old Indians, and verify the number whatever it is--3-4-5 I know that you will appreciate the situation and see some of the older Injuns, more than just one or two. Please do this sure!"

To their repeated requests, Mourning Dove always answers the same as she does in this letter to McWhorter dated May 19, 1930: "When Indians work their mystic medicine usually it's three times, unless very mad, when they work it five times, the limit. The limit is seldom used, but four is not a mystic number, that I am sure."

⁴In his treatise entitled "The Far West--The Home of the Salish and Dene" in British North America, Vol. 1 (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907), C. Hill-Tout writes, "Among the Salish everything goes by 'fours'; it is their mystic number" (174). However, this is not particularly borne out by the folktales that Hill-Tout collects.

See also Eileen Yanan, Coyote and the Colville (Omak, Washington: St. Mary's Mission, 1971); James Teit, "Okanogan Tales," Folktales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, ed. Franz Boas (Lancaster, Pa. & New York: American Folklore Society, 1917), pp. 65-91.

⁵The following is the Table of Contents submitted by Mourning Dove for Okanogan Sweat House:

1. The Great Spirit Names the Animal People
2. How Coyote Killed the Monster Whale of the Swah-Netk-Qha
3. The Whale Monster of the Swah-Netk-Qha
4. North Wind Monster
5. Coyote Kills Wind
6. Coyote Subdues the Man-Eating Monsters
7. Coyote Kills Owl-Woman
8. How Coyote Killed Flint
9. How Coyote Broke the Salmon Dam
10. The First Sun Dance
11. The Moon and Sun Gods
12. Boy Lynx and Owl-Woman
13. Rattlesnake Kills Salmon
14. Origin of Mosquito
15. How Crawfish Whipped Grizzlybear
16. How Gartersnake Scared Thunderbird
17. The Camas Woman
18. Coyote's Son Muskrat and Grizzlybear
19. The Sons of Beaver and of Coyote
20. Coyote and Woodtick
21. How Coyote Imitated Bear and Kingfisher
22. Chickadee Kills Elk
23. The Arrow Trail to the Upper World-Land
24. The Three Wolf Brothers and Three Bear Sisters
25. Coyote and Fox
26. How Rabbit Lost His Tail
27. How Skunk Came By His Tail
28. Coyote and Buffalo
29. Fisher and Martin
30. Fisher and His Brother Skunk
31. Coyote as a Handsome Woman
32. Coyote and His Daughter
33. How Coyote Lost and Regained His Eyes
34. How Coyote Drowned Because of Thirst
35. Coyote Devours His Own Children
36. Coyote Marries His Own Daughter
37. How Spider Came By His Long Legs
38. How Disease Came to the People

In his collection, Tales of the Okanogans, Donald Hines has tried to return to Mourning Dove's original order for the tales and has restored the ten tales eliminated by Guie. However, Hines does not follow

Mourning Dove's suggestions in the correspondence on the position of the naming myth and "The Arrow Trail." I would imagine that the order of the tales changed many times because of the three-way correspondence and that what eventually was filed by McWhorter as Mourning Dove's original manuscript may not necessarily have been the order she had given the tales.

⁶"Okanogan Tales," Folktales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, p. 65.

⁷Walter Cline, "Religious World View," The Sinkaietk or Southern Okanogan of Washington, ed. Leslie Spier, General Series in Anthropology, 6 (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Co., 1938). Cline writes on p. 161, "A passage in the Coyote tales informs us that Coyote's faeces, his special guardian spirits, advised and enabled him to transform himself into a wooden pan in order to outwit the Bird-woman. In another tale he eluded his foes by invoking his power to make the air dark and foggy."

For the story "Coyote and Locust" in Bulletin of Bureau of American Ethnology #59, Boas cites in footnote 5, p. 294, 13 tribal variations on the tale. In all, Coyote relies on his excrement to get him out of trouble.

Traditions of the Thompson River Indians of British Columbia, ed. James Teit (Memoirs of the American Folklore Society, 1898). Teit gives four examples of magical use of excrement. Also see Teit's version of "Coyote" in "Okanogan Tales," Folktales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes, p. 65.

⁸For example, she says this about the title in her original préface: "The Okanogan Sweat House as a title to this little volume was inspired by the halo of mysticism which surrounds this racial shrine of triple significance. A cleanser of the body, mind and spirit, the sweat-house may well be regarded as the background to our primal folk lore cult."

And in another letter to McWhorter that is undated, Mourning Dove writes: "The Indian believes in the sweat-house because he understands the meaning of its spiritual powers as no white man can understand . . . The Indian goes into the sweat-house and sings the song of the sweat-house and asks it and prays to have its gifts bestowed in his fortune, whether it be for love, gambling, racing, sickness, or long life. It is found that when faith goes with the lamenting of the song, of the spirit sweat-house, the Indian always has his rewards. The more he goes into the cone-shaped structure, the more benefits he gets from the spirit. It is held sacred as the white man's house of worship. No woman is allowed into the men's house of offerings, and no woman is allowed to enter the sweat-house without first being cleansed by clear waters of the stream. Always men never go into the sweat-house without bathing first. Or else the sweat-house frowns on him with ill fortune" (1505).

⁹Of power, Mourning Dove says: "The manitou (so-mashe) powers are something similar to the whiteman's spiritual beliefs. Instead of an Indian having a dead spirit for a "guide" they have the spirit of the animal as a "guide." They speak to an animal, which speaks to the

Indian in his sleep. It warns him in time of need, whether it be for death, gambling, racing, or sickness. This animal spirit warns him and he understands. It is part of his belief, and he is supposed to keep it secret, or else the animal's spirit power leaves him and his punishment is death. The Indian child is sent at night as part of his schooling to hunt the manitou (so-mashe) powers, so when he grows he may have powers to be of benefit in time of war, and filling of his food and preventing his life. If he finds a less powerful animal than his neighbor, his neighbor will devour his power by his so-mashe and kill this spirit doctor. When a medicine man doctors, he uses his hands and sings in the name of his power song, which the animal gives him, when he finds it in his youth" (1505).

The spelling for power varies. Mourning Dove sometimes writes "so-mashe" and other times "shoo-mesh." It is the same for Coyote's power which may be "squ-stenk" or "squas-tenk."

CHAPTER IV

CODA

The key is in remembering, in what is chosen for the dream.
In the silence of recovery we hold
the rituals of the dawn
now as then.

In these few lines, Paula Gunn Allen, a contemporary Laguna poet, summarizes the challenge facing each American Indian writer who would write out of the inherited traditions of the past. Writing is a selective process and not everything can be remembered nor can every aspect of one's cultural legacy be transposed onto the written page. Certain stories will be forgotten, others transformed; yet the power of the word is such that the core or the essence of truth that breathed life into the "rituals of the dawn," the ceremonies of another age, endures "now as then." What changes, perhaps, is the form of expression, but the very act of expression is an affirmation in language of one's existence and that in itself perpetuates culture. Though the oral tradition of many tribal communities has changed irrevocably and passed beyond time, what has endured is the written word and it is a credit to those early writers like Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove that they took those first tentative steps into print.

Both Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove were in a position to choose what they would "remember" in their literature, as each had grown up in a tribal setting and heard the tales of the storytellers from their earliest conscious moments. In her preface to Old Indian Legends, Zitkala Sa recalls hearing the stories of the old Dakota storytellers "under an open sky," and in her autobiographical sketches, she remembers

the thrill of anticipation, waiting for the stories to begin after dinner. Similarly, Mourning Dove remembers the custom within her own tribe of the storytellers going "from village to village" to relate "chip-chap-tiquik to the children." And in her preface to Coyote Stories, she describes those whom she revered most, especially Old Narciss who would "in the course of a narrative . . . jump up and mimic his characters, speaking or singing in a strong or weak voice, just as the Animal Persons were supposed to have done." For both writers, the oral tradition was a dynamic and vital force in their early lives that endowed them with an especial regard for the word.

But by the time Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove were to begin their literary careers, the oral tradition had become remote, locked in the memory of a handful of aging storytellers who had to be coaxed to share their wealth. Zitkala Sa had estranged herself from her tribe by spending so many years away from the reservation in school. And though she moved with much greater ease among her own people, Mourning Dove was also somewhat suspect because of the anthropologists who had gone before her digging into the memories of the older storytellers. What had once been so immediately available to them and such a source of pleasure in their infancy and early childhood years began to disappear and to "remember" any of the traditional tales of their tribes, both Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove had to search out the old storytellers. This situation placed them in the position of being outsiders to their culture. Instead of participating in the storytelling context, they were observers, checking and doublechecking plot details, asking their informants to repeat episodes, taking careful notes--in short, removing themselves from the oral tradition by looking back on it instead of moving out of it.

Instead of participating in tradition, they became preservers of tradition. What is interesting is the tradition that each chose to remember and commit to print. Without question, Iktomi and Coyote would have been familiar childhood companions because the trickster tales were designed as much for instruction as for entertainment. And these tales were accessible, available to everyone, universal in a sense as opposed to the tribal lore that would have had many more restrictions placed on it. With a few changes to make Iktomi or Coyote more acceptable to a children's audience, it was easy to translate these oral tales into written stories. Zitkala Sa, perhaps, was more conscious of creating a context for the tales which she borrowed in part from the form of the fairy tale, but both were able to fulfill a single aspiration--to preserve for posterity some of the traditions of their tribes. At the same time, they could present to their white audience stories as sophisticated as any Euro-American folktales that would, perhaps, serve to create a more favorable impression of the Indian by suggesting that he too enjoyed a rich and varied cultural legacy.

The influence of the white reading audience upon the early Indian writers cannot be exaggerated because within the American imagination, Indians have always been regarded as "exotic," "primitive," or "romantic." If Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove felt like the observers of their respective Indian cultures, they were the observed when it came to the white world. Zitkala Sa fascinated the eastern literary world because she had been "a veritable little savage, running wild over the prairie and speaking no language but her own . . ." How remarkable that she could also learn to read and write and publish in English. And though Mourning Dove enjoyed the support of McWhorter, her attraction

for him was no different. She would be the first American Indian woman to write a novel, that is, if she were nurtured properly. Perhaps, such attitudes were inevitable; certainly, they created a situation in which each writer tried to live up to certain literary expectations and in the process began to shape the oral traditions into forms that would be recognizable to their reading audience.

Mourning Dove initially chose the western romance as her form because it was a popular genre and it was fiction. Zitkala Sa, on the other hand, selected autobiography and the short story. In both cases, these choices are extraordinary because they are so far removed from the Indian storytelling tradition. Within the oral tradition, stories exist to explain the way things are and to record history, and they are considered to be true because they have been passed from one generation to the next. Oral storytelling is a communal event; it cannot exist without the dynamic between the teller and his audience. But writing is individual and isolated. The writer by necessity stands apart from his subject and comments on it. Writing is extra-creative in the sense that it goes beyond the domain of the spoken word into a world that must be recreated and contextualized. For Zitkala Sa, it was necessary to give shape to the oral Iktomi tales by inserting descriptions and didactic explanations into the narrative and by shifting from a purely episodic structure with no beginning and no end to a more tightly unified structure in which each tale had a shape and logical symmetry. Mourning Dove, on the other hand, chose to couch her remembered traditions in the safe realm of fiction where she could tell the Indian side of the story without directly subjecting herself to criticism. Both Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove were compelled to tell their side of the

story as a protest to the treatment of Indians by whites, a subject that could only exist in a written tradition. Within the oral tradition, stories were for internal consumption, to edify and preserve the group, not to defend the group against outside criticism. While stories were exchanged when tribes met or visited each other, the posture of protest was not characteristic of the oral mode. There might be stories of one tribe outwitting another or winning a battle, but such tales were told from a position of security and superiority because the tribe was, after all, a self-contained unit, a circle of protection against all outside forces.

Not so within the written tradition. As with black literature or any emerging minority literature, the Indian writer felt compelled to "prove" himself better than his oppressed condition might suggest. In the case of Zitkala Sa, for example, she chose to protest through her sentimentalized autobiographical sketches. Her experiences in school are mostly negative because no attempt is made to understand her or her culture; yet when she returns to the reservation, she is further alienated because she has been absent for so long. As a teacher of Indian students, she cannot resolve her ambivalence about educating them away from their tribes into the position of isolation she feels so acutely.

The theme of the dispossessed Indian is predominant in Indian literature and is inextricably linked to the emergence of a written literature. The very act of writing is to protect what has been lost. Mourning Dove treats the same theme in Cogewea. Her protagonist is the half-blood, neither Indian nor white, dispossessed of a place in the world and caught in the space between two alien landscapes in much

the same way that Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove were as they recorded the passing of one world into the language of another. Both felt a profound sense of responsibility to their cultures and both knew that they were the pioneers of a transitional moment in history. Zitkala Sa writes of her need to collect as many of the stories as she can "while the old people last," a sentiment that Mourning Dove echoes in letter after letter to McWhorter. One consequence of such self-consciousness is the tendency of both women to over sentimentalize or over romanticize their subjects. This does not occur so much in the trickster tales as it does in the fiction and autobiographical sketches. Theirs is a literature of polarities--Indian versus white, tradition versus change, primitive versus civilization, even oral versus written. There is no middle ground, only the perpetual motion of ambivalence which reflects itself not infrequently in awkward shifts in point of view. Zitkala Sa desires education above all else, but then resents that education because of the alienation it has occasioned. Cogewea ostensibly identifies strongly with her Indian heritage but then turns away from it repeatedly, ignoring the advice of Stemteemä, Jim's kindnesses, even the signs in nature. What is interesting is that this oscillation between two worlds continues to be a predominant theme in Native American literature. In the seventy-five years since Zitkala Sa wrote and the fifty years since Mourning Dove's publications, how much has really changed? Reservations still exist and are the center for a community of shared traditions, yet they are also a demoralizing source of shame for some, bitterness for others, indifference for many. Indians continue to be educated away from home in boarding schools, to be relocated to alien urban centers, to be always in that liminal state

of never quite entering either the Indian or the white world. Those who have lived close to their people and have then written "Indian" literature, writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko and Simon Ortiz, often find themselves misunderstood or even alienated from their community. And that may point to the single greatest difference between oral and written forms. The one is the expression of the community, the other of the individual. The oral tradition represents a collective experience and is circular in that everything comes back to the center, the tribe. The writer breaks that circle, losing some of the vitality that has characterized the oral dynamic between storyteller and audience, but gaining in the process the possibilities of communicating to a greater audience and perhaps acquiring a deeper understanding of one's relationship to heritage, culture, place.

Because writing was such a different mode of expression from oral storytelling, it is not unusual that so many of the early Indian writers worked with collaborators such as Mourning Dove did with McWhorter. As they moved into a new language and unfamiliar genres, the collaborator was a welcome guide to help in the translation of experience. We may wish that Mourning Dove had worked with someone less zealous than McWhorter, but that relationship was important in illuminating Mourning Dove's own fears and insecurities, aspirations and goals as a writer. Her extensive correspondence with McWhorter begins to suggest the ways in which collaborators were most apt to influence the literature written. There is no question, for example, that McWhorter romanticized Mourning Dove, viewing her as the pioneer that she was but also burdening her with the responsibility for preserving an entire culture. Though Mourning Dove often wrote of the inconveniences of living a nomadic and

primitive existence and wondered how her ancestors had done it on a regular basis, McWhorter preferred to envision her early life as idyllic and pastoral, much as Zitkala Sa portrays her childhood self as a "little sportive nymph on that Dakota sea of rolling green."

The key is in remembering, but too often, it seems, the collaborators chose to encourage those memories that reflected their own notions of the pastoral state. That appears to have been the case with Elaine Goodale Eastman who virtually wrote the books of her husband, Charles Eastman. And that certainly is the voice that comes through Cogewea's nostalgic reveries for another time. But as romanticized as were the visions of the collaborators and those of the Indian writers themselves, the world had changed, an era had passed, and we must be grateful that Zitkala Sa and Mourning Dove were there to record even a moment of that transition and to transform their traditions into a permanent form that has enriched both our literary history and our imagination.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TWO VARIANTS ON "IKTOMI AND THE DUCKS"

1. Recorded by Clark Wissler, published in Journal of American Folklore, 20 (1907), pp. 122-123.

SPIDER AND COYOTE

One day Spider went out to walk. He came to a lake where many ducks were swimming in the water. "Now, how shall I get those ducks?" he said to himself. So he began to lay plans. He gathered together a great bundle of grass, placed it over his head, and waded out into the lake. As he was wading along, a large duck called out, "Spider, what are you doing with that grass?"

"I am in a hurry," said Spider; "those are some songs I must deliver to the people at once."

"Suppose you sing one of them for us," said the duck.

"No, I have no time," said Spider.

Now, as the duck insisted, Spider said, "Well, I will sing one if you will call all the ducks out here." When the ducks were brought together, Spider took one straw out of the bundle and sang. Then he directed the ducks to close their eyes and keep them closed. Then Spider began to sing,--

"Dance with your eyes shut,
Dance with your eyes shut."

While he was singing and the ducks were dancing, he began to kill them with a club. Now one of the ducks opened his eyes, and seeing what was going on, warned the others, at which they all flew away. The duck that looked had red eyes.

Spider picked up the ducks he had killed, put them on his back, and started on. At last he came to a large tree, sat down under the branches, and made a fire. He plucked the feathers from the ducks, and arranged them around the fire to roast. Some of them he covered up in the ashes. Soon the wind began to blow, and the branches of the tree, rubbing against each other, made a squeaky noise. "Now, what does the tree mean by that noise," said Spider. "I shall make him quit." Then Spider climbed into the tree. He saw that the squeaky noise resulted from one branch rubbing over another. "My brothers, you must not fight in that way," said Spider. As they paid no attention to him he put his hand between them to part them. Then the branches came together and held his hand fast. "Oh, let me go! Let me go!" cried Spider.

Now while Spider's hand was held between the branches, he looked around and saw Coyote coming along. He called out, "Coyote, I have some meat cooking here. You must not take it."

When Coyote heard this, he said to himself, "I guess he has some meat all right." Coyote snuffed about until he found the ducks roasting by the fire, then sat down and ate all of them. As he started away, Spider said aloud, "I hope Coyote did not find those ducks in the ashes." When Coyote heard this he said, "I guess that is so; he did hide some in the ashes." Then Coyote scratched away the ashes, ate the ducks, but stuck their feet back into the ashes as they were before.

A while after Coyote had gone, the wind died down and Spider got his hand loose. He was now very hungry. Rushing to the fire, he took hold of the legs sticking out of the ashes, but as the bodies of the ducks were not drawn out he said, "My, I have been up in the tree so long that these ducks are overdone. Their legs pull right off." Then

he began to dig in the ashes as fast as he could but found nothing. "Coyote is a rascal," he said. Then he started out in pursuit, and overtook him at the side of a hill. "Now, Coyote, I shall kill you," he said, laying hold of him. He tied Coyote's feet together, and carried him along on his back. After a time he sat down to rest, laid Coyote upon the ground, and began to build a fire. "Now, what shall I do with the skin," said Spider. Now while Spider was building the fire, Coyote untied his feet, but lay as if asleep. "Well, I do not need the skin," said Spider. "I shall throw him into the fire." Just as he reached out to lay hold of Coyote, he sprang up and ran away. Then Spider stood by the fire and swore.

2. James LaPointe, Legends of the Lakota (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1976), pp. 95-99.

"IKTOMI AND HIS BAG OF SONGS"

Once upon a long time ago there lived one known as Iktomi, whose home was in a small village. He was not a good citizen, and the villagers were not proud of him. He showed no interest in civic affairs; he viewed with distaste such necessary functions as the hunt, warfare, and other matters of public concern. Though lazy and shiftless, his life was an easy one. He lived off the gullibilities of his fellow men. There came a day however, when his bag of tricks soured and back-fired. He became a man despised, without friends. This was a bad time for Iktomi, but he was not worried. He thought it was about time anyway to look around, see new faces and find fresher fields in which to ply his trade.

It was customary, in ancient times, that when a person of note was setting out on a long journey, he was feted and given gifts of moccasins and concentrated foods for his journey. Iktomi had no friends, so there

were no farewell parties nor gifts, and no final friendly handshakes.

He was soon on his way with his meager belongings heading northward to new adventures. After a few days of uneventful marching he realized that he must quickly find something to eat. The hurt in his belly was causing his mind to wander. He felt sick. As the hot sun bore down upon him, his pace slowed. He was famished.

Now in a state of despair, he came to the rim of a high ridge. Behold! There before him was a wide valley, with a heavily wooded stream, cutting green, rounded patterns as it wound its way down the beautiful valley, finally disappearing far away in a hazy mist. Dizzy with hunger and fatigue, Iktomi was uncertain. Was this the dream of a starving man? He shook himself and squinted, but there it was, no wandering of the mind, no mirage! Though weak and wobbly, he ran down the hill as fast as his legs could carry him, threw himself down at the edge of the stream, and plunged his head into the cool water. He moistened his dry throat, and sipped a little water at intervals until he felt fully revived.

He must find something to eat, he told himself. He arose and stumbled along the edge of the stream. There before him, in a widened eddy, a flock of ducks were floating around, contentedly riding the small ripples. He was so hungry he was about to dive in, grab a few and eat them alive. But wait! There must be a better way, he decided.

An idea flashed through his mind. Sneaking back into the thicket, he began stuffing a bag with grass as fast as he could. When the bag was full, he threw it over his shoulder and nonchalantly walked along the edge of the stream where the ducks could see him. The ducks saw Iktomi with the big bag. Why the big bag, they wondered?

The curious ducks called to Iktomi, but he pretended not to hear them. He was not about to go out of sight, however. The ducks, unable to restrain themselves, started up a quacking clamor, begging Iktomi to tell them what he had in the big bag and why he must hurry on. With a grand display of impatience he stopped, and grudgingly told the ducks to mind their own affairs and not delay him with trifles as he must hurry on to the next village. "Why, why?" The ducks quacked. "Because," Iktomi said, "There is going to be a grand festival and I am the chosen singer for their dances. These are my songs." He tapped the bag and made as though he was about to hurry on, when there was an outburst of more quacking. "Please stay, we want to dance. Sing a nice song for us and we will dance." Iktomi pretended to be annoyed. He fumed and fussed. At last he agreed to sing for them. "This song is strictly for ceremonial dancing, so be careful and obey its commands. It is called the 'shut eye' song, which means you must dance with your eyes tightly closed. You will have red eyes if you open them before I finish singing," he said. The little ducks, so eager to dance, nodded their heads as Iktomi sang:

"Ishto gomus wachi po
Ishto gomus wachi po
Tuwa yatunwanpi kin
Ishta nisha sha kte."

"With eyes tightly closed,
ye must dance
With eyes tightly closed,
ye must dance
To you who dare to see
Forever red thine eyes
will be."

The dumpy little ducks came out of the water and waddled around in rhythm with the beat, their eyes tightly shut. Iktomi did not miss a beat in his singing as he knocked the fattest ones over with a stick. One little duck, not so trusting, opened its eyes and saw what Iktomi was doing. "Open your eyes, you fools, Iktomi is killing you," said

the duck. The ducks who remained alive flew away in a flash. Iktomi was elated. His scheme had worked well. He had enough ducks for a few day's supply.

Iktomi had no further use for his bag of songs, so he dumped the grass out, gathered up his ducks, and put them in the bag. Next, he mused, he needed a quiet place to roast the ducks. Trees being plentiful, he selected a spot, built a fire of ash wood, and when there remained plenty of hot embers, he buried the ducks under the hot coals for a barbecue.

With the savory scent of roasting ducks pleasantly teasing the appetite, Iktomi thought a short nap was in order before the big feast. He tried to sleep, but couldn't. A gusty wind was blowing. High up in the treetop, two large branches rubbing against each other made harsh, squeaky sounds. Iktomi, a juicy meal awaiting him, was in an expansive mood. He called up to the branches: "Brothers, do not quarrel. You are of the same blood. Do not use loud words." While trying to appease the feuding brothers, the wind blew harder, making the racket much worse. Iktomi, to prove his noble intentions, climbed up the tree, and as a gust of wind blew the branches apart, he stuck his peace-making hand between the quarreling branches. You guessed it. There was a sudden lull. Iktomi was helplessly stuck way up there in the tree top, a hand wedged between two large branches. The aroma of roasting ducks floated up and gently caressed his nostrils.

While perched on high, Iktomi had a panoramic view of the countryside. He could see a fox trotting here and there far away, as though following a scene. His nose close to the ground, the fox would run, then stop, lift up his head and sniff the air. Iktomi could see that

the fox looked awfully gaunt. Perhaps he hadn't had anything to eat in days.

Finally, the hungry fox gave up and was about to trot away when Iktomi, no longer able to contain himself, shouted at the departing fox: "You scavenger, don't you dare come near here. I have some nice, fat ducks roasting in the ashes and I don't want any moocher sneaking around here expecting a hand-out!"

The fox stopped, sniffed the air, and said, "Ah, so it is true, my nose never deceives me." Despite a scream-tirade from Iktomi, the fox now followed the scent straight to the smoldering fire. The fire had died down; the ducks lay in the ashes. The fox snatched out a juicy duck, tore the tender, steaming meat from limb to limb, savoring every morsel, while Iktomi drooled and slobbered with rage and hunger.

In spite of Iktomi's nasty temper, the fox was in a jovial mood. He invited Iktomi, between bites, to climb down and join him in the sumptuous banquet of roast duck.

"I would gladly bring a duck or two up to you, but unfortunately I never learned to climb a tree, so hurry and get down here before the ducks get cold," he said. Iktomi could hear the crunching noises as the fox chewed away on the delicate, tasty bones.

As food found its way into the empty cavities of his belly, the fox grew relaxed and more kindly. After all, he mused, the ducks belonged to Iktomi. He should at least leave one or two for him; even diplomats have to eat now and then. The kindly fox called up to Iktomi and told him of his humane plans.

He really wanted to carry out his good intentions, but his appetite was still in fine shape. There was room in his stomach, and the ducks

tasted so good he kept eating away. Finishing one duck, he decided to eat just one more, and leave the others for Iktomi. He raked over the coals. Alas, to his dismay, no more ducks. "What a thoughtless glutton I am! Oh well, Iktomi will understand. He is a man of noble tendencies. Right now he is on a peace-making mission, and perhaps not at all hungry," said the fox to himself.

Duck banquets were not an everyday affair for the fox, and so, with a full stomach, he felt the urge for a nap. Yawning, he stretched out right there on Iktomi's grass cushion and slept like an innocent babe. He awakened fully refreshed, in the best of spirits. Before taking his leave, like a true gentleman, he thanked Iktomi profusely for the festive meal. Next time, said Mr. Fox, when Iktomi again had roast duck, he must not forget his old friend, the fox. With those gracious parting words the fox trotted away.

When the fox was just a dot in the shimmering rising heat waves, a gust of wind blew the branches apart. Iktomi jerked his numb hand away and climbed down. He ranted and tore at his straggly hair, screaming insults at the fox and the world in general. All that was left of the ducks was a stale odor and a few bones.

In this Iktomi story one may find a few lessons. The world is full of confidence men, each having his own brand of shut-eye songs. We all have the habit of opening our mouths at the wrong time. And, it would be nice if we could learn never to mess around in other people's affairs.

So goes the story.

APPENDIX B

McWhorter's "Vision" 29 Nov. 1915

I am not given to flattery. I do not like the lie. I try in all cases to speak and act honestly with all people. But listen, this is what I see for you. It is not a dream:--it is a vision which looms up on your future horizon, and I see it as I see the sun and the stars. It is as a vast rainbow set in the clouds. Listen, Morning Dove of the Okanogans; while the Old Wolf of the Yakimas speaks.

I see a broad path, worn smooth by the moccasined feet of the tribes which have gone before. It is the path of life, winding along the streams and the hills, crossing deserts and mountains, and midway it divides into two trails. One is the greater, leading to the left and is easy to the weary feet of the traveler. It too leads along the streams and the groves where the birds sing and the sunshine is bright; and the shadows are cool and the air is sweet. It is not a long trail, and at the end I see a cloud as dark as night where all is oblivion. This trail is worn deep with the tramp of the millions who have passed over it, but even the moccasin tracks are no more. All are wasted by the drifting sands, as the wind sweeps down from the invisible and sings a funeral dirge in the moaning pines. This trail is a mingling of beauty and ease, luring to all. I see many on this trail. They are bearing bundles which glow and shine like the gold that is washed from the river beds. These bundles are the traditions and history of the tribes. They are bourn by the old people, who look

sad and I hear them wailing as they try to leave their bundles by the wayside for the others who are to follow, but they cannot rid themselves from the binding cords. They pass with their bundles of light--the history of their people--into the cloud and are seen no more.

I look back beyond the parting trails, and I see a young woman coming with the old and the middle-aged, approaching the parting of the trails. All are bearing the bundles of light, but those bourn by the older are the brighter and larger. I see this young woman speak often with the old people, who seem pleased. I see them sit down, some times in the desert and sometimes on the river banks, and I see the old people open their bundles and take from them many beautiful stories, which glint in the sunshine like silver and gold, and I see them give these to the young woman who eagerly places them in her bundle, which daily grows larger. I see the old people take her by the hand and bless her as she passes on. I note the happy look that radiates from the face of the young woman as she receives these gifts from the many old people, and I see her bundle growing larger and more valuable as she travels towards the parting of the trails. Hope beams in her eye which looks so kindly upon the bent forms of her companions, who have traveled so many weary moons and who have seen their tribes scattered and disappear. She is an inspiration to those who meet her, and her voice is as the water that passes over the pebbles, low and soothing. A noble impulse is hers to preserve the memory of her poor people as they turn hopelessly into the left-hand trail and are forgotten with their bundles of wealth.

I see the young woman approach the dividing trails and pause. I see her look out over the left-hand trail and shudder as the black

cloud looms forbidding and dark before her. I see her turn and with shaded eyes gaze back over the long and beaten path which she had traveled. She sees along its way the bleaching skeleton poles of the lodges whose coverings have crumbled to dust. In vision she sees the flitting forms of the mighty warriors of the past, whose achievements have been swallowed up by the cloud of the left-hand trail. She sees the women toiling at the wigwam doorway, dressing the soft skin of the deer, or weaving baskets of strange make and of mystic colored hues. She sees the children playing in the woods, or chasing across the desert sands. She sees the hunter-bands returning from the hunt, laden with the fruits of the chase. She notes a primitive life, free and content with but few cares. She sees the tribal historian instructing his people in the past history and the mysteries of life, adding to the size of the bundles of each of the hearers. She sees the people scattered and passing rapidly on the left trail, and as they pass, try to leave their bundles at the parting. No one is there to receive them and they are carried on and lost in the cloud. She tries to count the ages of moons that pass before her in this vision, but her head swims and only a vague idea can be formed. She is distressed with the sight, and weary she turns and looks up the small winding trail leading to the right. It seems steep and winding along cliffs and fearful precipices. Sharp flintstones strew the ground, ready to pierce the moccasin of the wearer. Not many tracks are to be seen on this trail, for but few of her people have passed over it. At the top she beholds a halo of light--the symbol of immortality. It is the FUTURE, that which cannot be forgotten. It is the reflection from the bundles bourn by those who have come up the winding, toilsome trail. The lure is enchanting, but

the young woman feels that her strength is not sufficient for her to gain this desired goal. Undecided she camps at the parting of the trails with the black cloud and the halo both in sight.

As she rests there, she sees many of her people pass out onto the left-hand trail, but none on the right. Some of them she hails and is given valuable gifts from their bundles. Others pass while she is sleeping, and are compelled to take their bundles with them. The young woman awakens and hears the wailing of these old people because they could not leave their bundles for their children. She sees little ones pass by, casting looks of yearning towards her, and beckoning her to take the right-hand trail. Old people stop, give her their bundles and point to the steep trail, then pass silently but content to the left. For had they not left their bundles with one who would carry them safely up the winding trail to be preserved for the generations to come?

I see these inspirations at times animate the young woman to attempt the trail that curves along steep and difficult ways. But then I see her pause by her camp fire, cherishing her bundle, yet hesitating, fearful of her own strength. I see her camp-fire burning steadily and undiminished, but the wood from which she replenishes it is growing less. I see that in time this fire will burn out. Then, all too late only the left-hand trail will be hers; for her strength and ability to scale the heights of the right-hand trail shall have passed forever. With her priceless bundle she will have gone the way of her poor people, who had not the ability that she possessed to climb to the halo of immortality.

Why should this young woman hesitate--dreaming while her camp fire burns out? I see in her vast possibilities. I see a future of renown;

a name that will live through the ages, if only she will decide to take the right-hand trail. Helping hands are held out to her, and the trail will not prove so rough as it appears. Your race-blood will be of actual benefit to her in this work. It is a duty she owes to her poor people, whose only history has been written by the destroyers of their race. Let the Morning Dove of the Okanogans take cheer and step out from the gloom of ghostly fears into the golden light of opportunity, exulting in her own strength and show to the world her nobility of purpose to perpetuate the story of her people in their primitive simplicity. Nothing is in the way of your success.

I want to hear from you. I want to hear you say that you are going to work. You will like it when you once get started. Write the stories in your own way. Do not think of them not being correctly composed. A second and even a third writing will correct any defect in the first composition. Come down here and let me help you. Not that I know better than you, but I have had the longer experience, and can give advice along certain lines. You want to give the stories as they are told by the old people as near as possible. YOU WILL GET THEM RIGHT. I want to see your manuscript. I want to see you write the "Okanogan Sweat-House." It is a fine subject. Remember that the only "Big Foot" of the Yakimas is your friend, and that the friends of "Big Foot" are many and of the best. They will all help you.

APPENDIX C

Mourning Dove's Original Preface to Okanogan Sweat House

Just Why?

It has been with the greatest reluctance that I consented to attempt this chronicling of the few legends now available of the once profuse oral philosophy of the Okanogans. And now, on the threshold of publication, there is a heart-shrinking from what I realize must be regarded by the older members of my fast dwindling tribe as irreverent sacrilege. For these old people and the memory of our ancestors, I hold the profoundest reverential respect. The spiritual concepts of any people are entitled to be regarded with charitable sanctity, but as a race we have from our very earliest contact with the Caucasian been made to realize that we hold no ideals, as measured by the standard of the white man worthy of perpetuation. This most unpleasant fact, aside from early mind impressions imbued during an early tepee life, was present in every phase of the meagre educational instructions received in my brief Agency and Mission schooling.

This specter--soul-shadowing and deterrent--long precluded the present attempt at chronicling, and, but for the sympathetic urgings of one who has in many ways proven himself worthy of our inmost confidence, I never could have found adequate courage to face the probable displeasure of fellow tribesmen in thus "holding up to ridicule" the sacred beliefs and teachings handed down through the cycles of the snows. To He-mene Ka-wan--the "silvery-hued" Yakima--as in vision

was revealed my duty in rescuing from oblivion the Legend-Bundles being borne by the aged Okanogans over the Trail of Shadows to the Night of Sleep. This determined me to join with him as a co-worker in the field of tribal legends, and to forego a dream of weaving this folk-lore into novel and romance form.

With this resolution formed, my sole ambition has been to depict the stories as nearly as practical in their original dressing. Some of them vary in version which may be said of all Indian legends. This oftentimes is attributable to the elucidations of a perverted mind, and may be detected. A primal knowledge of the Okanogan language has been a factor in eliminating these objectionable features. A few have been withheld as unsuited to a work of this kind, but are interesting from an ethnological view point. Collectively, they portray the mind-struggles of primitive people in darkness endeavoring to fathom the fundamentals of the First Great Cause.

"The Okanogan Sweat House" as a title for this little volume was inspired by the halo of mysticism which surrounds this racial shrine of triple significance. A cleanser of the body, mind and spirit, the sweat-house may well be regarded as the background to our primal folk lore cult.

Sincerely,

Mourning Dove

Omak, Washington

APPENDIX D

Reviews of Coyote Stories

The following excerpts from reviews of Coyote Stories may be found in file #464 of the McWhorter collection.

Town Crier, Seattle, Washington, November 11, 1933:

These authentic Indian legends have, besides their story interest for both juveniles and adults, an anthropological value, for they comprise a permanent record of ancient tribal legends bound to die out in the future as the Indian race loses its identity.

Frontier and Midland, January, 1934:

A collection of Indian legends, Coyote Stories is written with a simplicity and charm that sharpens the sly humous of the tales and makes them easily read by (or to) the youngest generation. Students of folklore will find in them interesting comparisons and an authenticity, not only in their telling, but also in the very adequate footnotes by L. V. McWhorter that make them a distinct addition to American regional literature.

The book is attractively composed with a series of charming illustrations by H. D. Guie. The illustrator deserves credit, also, for his faithful recounting of these stories as Mourning Dove, an Indian princess, has told them to him.

Boston Globe, November 27, 1933:

The author is a really beautiful and intelligent Indian woman, who has related the animal legends of her tribe with singular felicity and a good deal of wit. The text is accompanied by the Indian words and their proper meaning, and is illustrated with especially wonderful soft outline drawings by Heister Dean Guie, the editor of Mourning Dove's book.

These are new stories to most white people, and they have a whole fabric of beliefs behind them--one of the first, for instance, explaining how the whale came to live only in salt water. The book is written simply and clearly enough for children to understand, and powerfully enough to keep any adult reading to the end.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin, December 2, 1933:

Again has Caxton Printers, Ltd., done itself proud in this collection of Indian legends of the animals. Mourning Dove, an educated Indian woman, has set down the folk lore of her tribe, the Okanogan Indians, and although the book has been compiled primarily for the children it is well worth a perusal by the older folk. . . . Altogether it is just the book to give a boy or girl interested in the great outdoors.

Lexington [Ky.] Leader, December 17, 1933:

In all the folk-tales of Northwest Indians which I have read, Coyote is the main figure--a combination of silly jester and divine agent. So he is in this little volume by an Okanogan Indian woman. But if he is familiar himself, most of his exploits are new. To the best of my recollection, not more than two or three incidents related in this book are to be found in the published stories of Blackfeet, Flatheads, Sioux or Crow.

Mourning Dove, too, is a more effective story-teller than most of those who have attempted to preserve for us the myths of the American Indian, perhaps because her fine simplicity of expression makes less impossible the impossible events she recounts.

Certainly, her book should please juvenile readers, and be valuable to them besides. And students of the Indian naturally will welcome it to the all too slender company of books which seek to keep alive a knowledge of the rich folk-lore of the red man.

Mourning Dove's stories, which have been passed down from mouth to mouth through generations, are repeated exactly as she remembers hearing them, except for slight editing, the publishers assure us. They are introduced by a brief foreword by that well-known Indian, Chief Standing Bear, and are supplemented with unusually accurate and informative notes by L. V. McWhorter, curator of the Washington State Historical Society. Heister Dean Guie, the editor, has supplied very effective illustrations.

Oregonian, Portland, Oregon, December 24, 1933:

For hundreds of years generations of Indians in the Pacific northwest listened to these stories, told with appropriate gesture and feeling by bronzed story tellers, probably the most loved and respected persons in the tribes. They show the Indian's realistic outlook on life, his sound and sane realization that good dwells beside evil in gods and men, his sense of the dramatic, his ambitions and incidentally much of the commonplace thinking of the routine of his life. In them the Indian is revealed as an effective artist, either as a teller or embellisher or inventor of stories whose terseness and simplicity are more effective than most of the elaborate frippery of the more effete stories of our

own civilization. No insensible savage was the Indian who constructed or told these tales; he saw accurately, he felt deeply and he expressed pathos and tragedy as well as he expressed exultation and humor. He handled human emotions with rare skill.

The 27 stories in this collection will help more than many heavy volumes of ethnological theorizing to reconstruct the vivid life of the Indian in the Pacific northwest. It is a valuable group, because it gives a broader picture of the Indian of this area in picturing another side of his personality and because it saves for posterity, which will wonder about these things, a precious part of his art. In the swift obliteration of the Indian and his culture little has remained, so that such a collection as this is significant; it is a pity that there are too few of them.

These stories are authentic, rooted deeply in Indian history.

Boise Statesman, November 5, 1933:

Mourning Dove is especially qualified to write such a book. Her mother was Swhee-al-puh full blood and she herself was born in a canoe on the Kootenai river near Bonner's Ferry, Idaho. Today she is not only popular among her own people but is a popular lecturer on Indian life with various clubs, societies and other women's organizations in the Northwest. She is a member of the Washington State Historical Society and wrote "Cogewea, the Half-Blood."

To anyone interested in anthropology this volume is indispensable and to children and even grown ups it is a most fascinating collection, charmingly written and cleverly arranged. The illustrations are unusually appropriate and are a real supplement to the book.

Washington Post, December 16, 1933:

. . . Humishuma is an Indian woman of the Okanogan tribe in Washington State. The stories she tells in this book are those she heard as a child from the old men of her tribe, stories handed down from generation to generation about the animal people who were on the earth before the Indians came. Such stories are called "Chip-chap-tiquk." To the younger Indians they are improbable. To the old Indians they are "accounts of what really happened when the world was very young." Preserved now and set down for the eyes of the white people, these tales are as fresh and delightful reading as a child or an adult could ask for.

. . . A quantity of explanatory footnotes, often learnedly bilingual, would make the volume of deep interest to an anthropologist. . . . It is a charming little book, holding the poetry of a great and vanishing people.

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