STUDIES IN AMERICAN INDIAN LITERATURES
Department of English
University of Richmond, Virginia 23173

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 1
University of Richmond
Virginia 23173

Vol. 2, No. 1
Spring 1990

Studies in American Indian Literatures

SAIL

Studies in American Indian Literatures

Series 2

Volume 2, Number 1
Spring 1990

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SAIL is published quarterly. Subscription rates for 1990 are $8 within the United States, $12 (American) outside the U.S. *SAIL* does not accept retroactive subscriptions, but back issues of volume 1 are available at $12 the volume ($16 outside the U.S.).

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2 Middle Grove Avenue
Greenfield Center, New York 12833

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ISSN: 0730-3238

Production of this issue was funded by the University of Richmond.

CONTENTS

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING, THE RUSSIANS ARE DEAD: Myth and Historical Consciousness in Two Contact Narratives
James Ruppert 1

FROM CREATION STORIES TO '49 SONGS: Cultural Transactions with the White World as Portrayed in Northern Plains Indian Story and Song
Joseph E. DeFlyer 11

COMMENTARY
From the Editors 28
Native American Scholarship Fund . . . 29

REVIEWS
The Summer in the Spring: Ojibway Lyric Poems and Tribal Stories. Ed. Gerald Vizenor
Sharon M. Dilloway 29

Tony Hillerman. Fred Erisman.
Barre Toelken 31

CONTRIBUTORS 33

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING, THE RUSSIANS ARE DEAD:
Myth and Historical Consciousness in Two Contact Narratives

by James Ruppert

Raven and the Russians are two unlikely partners in historical narratives of the first contact between Europeans and the Natives of Southern Alaska. For those of us brought up with Western conceptions of history, these two classes of beings could never meet in anything we would call history. Not only do we expect a projection of uninvolved objectivity, but conventionally, for us, history must evoke a reality of facts and physical validation, a reality like our own today, a realm the antithesis of which is myth, by which we mean a field of unsubstantiated fantasy supported only by belief. Because this separation is so strong in our culture, I fear we tend to misread many first contact narratives, establishing motives and analyzing actions with as much misperception as the original actors. For each time we read oral narratives of first contact, we recreate that moment of cross-cultural fertilization, as the storyteller recreates the beginnings in the telling of the tale, and we also enter a reality where myth and history fuse, support each other and influence action. David Rasmussen reminds us that myth is concerned " . . . not with presenting an objective vision of the world, but to present man's true understanding of himself in the world in which he lives " (10).

Oral historical narratives investigate man's understanding of himself but in the context of an unusual event, an event the Western reader perceives through assumptions of history and something we call facts. The study of oral historical narratives deconstructs our notion of the objective nature of events. As such oral contact narratives express a vision of experience where history is suffused with myth to the point that signification exudes from mythic patterns often submerged under the surface of narrative, but always present in the historical/mythical consciousness of the native actors. In oral contact narratives, historical consciousness is always mythic in form as well as content.

Recently historians have begun to explore the hidden assumptions, expectations, and cultural patterns which support Western views of history. The pre-critical cognitive positions underlying historical thought have been extensively explored by Hayden White. As White examines the deep structure of historical thought, he has identified four major tropes of Western cultural thought which prestructure ways of thinking about events we wish to place in a history. However, White is aware that while historical thinking is universal, the pre-

critical cognitive positions taken by cultures may be quite different. Following Freud, White argues that

> Understanding is a process of rendering the unfamiliar, or the "uncanny" in Freud's sense of the term, familiar; or removing it from the domain of things felt to be "exotic" and unclassified into one or another domain of experience encoded adequately enough to be felt to be humanly useful, nonthreatening, or simply known by association. This process of understanding can only be tropical in nature, for what is involved in the rendering of the unfamiliar into the familiar is a troping that is generally figurative. (*Tropics* 5)

In oral cultures of Native America, that process of understanding proceeded by placing new events into a cosmology and epistemological "domain of experience" based on a common core of cultural meaning; that is, the oral tradition and the living field of myth as it interpenetrated with the lives of the community every day on every level. Participants then in this oral and mythic field of experience would attempt to find meaning in new events on the historical plane by reference to what White calls "a deep level of consciousness" on which the oral historian would also have to adopt "conceptual strategies."

The nature of figuration in this context leads to what might be called "mythic troping," for in the worldview of many native societies, meaning is revealed when the new event is fixed or associated in a relationship to the mythic/spiritual world which surges behind the practical perceptions of the events of life. Contact narratives have survived for so long in the oral imagination, not only because they reveal cultural values confronted with a new challenge, but also because they present those moments when mythic prefiguration is called to come to the fore of human experience to make familiar the unfamiliar.

An oral first-contact narrative of the Tlingit might make this process clear. Though collected in the 1960s, the narrative has survived for centuries in various forms in Tlingit clans. The narrative begins with the Tlingits seeing something white bobbing out on the waves. It is the white sail of a ship coming into the bay, probably the Russian explorers Izmailov and Bocharov. At one point it comes closer:

> "What's that?
> "What's that, what's that?"
> "It's something different!"
> "It's something different!"

"Is it Raven?"
"Maybe that's what it is."
"I think that's what it is--
Raven who created the world.
He said he would come back again."
Some dangerous thing was happening. (Dauenhauer 303-5)

Knowing it is something different and probably dangerous, they abandon the village for the protection of the forest. (Long ago in story time, Raven was all white before he turned black). The people fear that they will turn to stone if they watch Raven come to them, but they also are interested and excited. Uncertainty abounds as the people try to decide how to interpret the meaning of the event, and the mythic level of experience seems make the most sense. They hear an unusual and fearful sound (an anchor being dropped). Soon they decide to roll skunk cabbage as a telescope (it will keep them from turning to stone) and they watch things climbing around on Raven. The mythic troping has brought the unfamiliar into the field of human/spirit interaction.

Only by ritual action can humans clarify the meanings that come from the voices of the spirit world and make them palatable to human perceptions. "When no one turned to stone while watching, someone said, 'Let's go out there. We'll go out there.' 'What's that?' Then there were two young men; from the woods, a canoe was pulled down to the beach" (Dauenhauer 305-7). The men board and are shown many wonderful things like mirrors, and then are given food to eat which they take to be maggots and sand (actually it is rice and sugar) and liquor to drink. When they return to shore, they tell everyone about the many people in the ship and all the amazing things they have seen and eaten. Then the people all go out in their canoes to the ship.

In confronting the new phenomenon, the Tlingit attempt to place it in a conceptual framework which accepts miraculous events such as the one they are seeing. Oral tradition as well as shamanistic and hunting experience establish the familiarity of the Tlingit with the animal/spiritual world around them. The vision of Great Raven returning evokes an appropriate ritualistic response by the human community. Raven, as the source of much of creation, is also known for originating many unique and wonderful phenomena. Tlingit worldview would have found no difficulty in seeing a unity in what we would call mythic and historical elements. Furthermore, anthropologist Frederica de Laguna has noted the fluid nature of Tlingit conceptions of history and myth:

> The past, as we have seen could be conceived as belonging to two different epochs: "long ago," the time of myth, when the world is not yet as it is today; and the more recent time of "history." Yet my efforts to separate the events belonging to these two realms of time show how far they may overlap; sometimes we seem to be dealing with what might constitute a third, intermediate period of legendary history. However, it is neither possible to arrange mythical events in any temporal sequence, nor can one tell when historical time began. "Mythical" and "historical" events are often equally miraculous from our point of view, and not all natives agree on the distinctions between them. In some sense, "myth" time is a timeless eternity. (*Under Mount St. Elias* 798)

The return of a powerful mythic character as or in a ship, while unusual, would not be impossible. De Laguna struggles with the classification of events into the two Western categories and settles for a third category which acknowledges the indeterminate nature of much discourse. She concludes that the myth time is still here in many ways. For the Tlingit, mythic perception infused everyday perception, gave meaning to it, presented a trope for how new events connected to the past. Legendary history describes the nature of all that we call history because mythic time ultimately is always present, a timeless eternity. De Laguna's insight finds expansion as White and other contemporary historians attempt to deconstruct the Western notion of history to reveal its mythic and narrative underpinnings.

De Laguna found many stories which were difficult to categorize; for instance, in the 1950s the Tlingit were telling tales in which the Russians are trying to get Raven drunk with their whiskey or in which Raven is said to be still living in a cave in the Aleutian Islands. These stories erase our definitions of myth and history, and establish the all-pervasiveness of legendary history. White explores this flexible position of the storyteller as oral historian when he writes that

> the lateness of the invention of historical discourse in human history and the difficulty of sustaining it in times of cultural breakdown (as in the early Middle Ages) suggests the artificiality of the notion that real events could "speak themselves" or be represented as "telling their own story." Such a fiction would have posed no problems before the distinction between real and imaginary events was imposed upon the storyteller; storytelling becomes a problem only

> after two orders of events dispose themselves before the storyteller as possible components of stories and storytelling is compelled to exfoliate under the injunction to keep the two orders unmixed in discourse. What we wish to call mythic narrative is under no obligation to keep the two orders of events, real and imaginary, distinct from one another. (*Content* 3-4)

The Tlingit storytellers reflect the people's perception which allows equal reality to events validated by what Western thinking would call "objective observation" or "imagination," thus erasing the distinction between the two orders, though a narrative may end up emphasizing one level of reality over another. White's remarks presuppose not only that all cultures make these distinctions, but also that the criterion for this distinction is the same. White's task here, of course, is to analyze deep structure of Western history, but what he says of mythic narrative is even truer for oral legendary history.

Behind the Tlingit oral historical tale stand many Raven tales which tell of his great creative ability as well as the dramatic way in which he acts. One can see the Tlingit using the mythic stories as a blueprint for understanding an unusual event. The events are made familiar by reference to mythological events which are the origin and model for contemporary events. It is not unusual that these mythological events would form the basis of Tlingit epistemology and historical consciousness, for Tlingit traditional thought more consistently deals with events than with qualities or essences. Narrative, rather than exposition or abstract explanation, was the form in which the conceptual schema and the values of the social order were verbally expressed.

It seems that some of what White concludes about pre-critical historical thinking in the Western tradition may be applicable to historical thinking in Native oral tradition. The pre-critical cultural codes may differ as well as the forms by which reference is made back to a familiar meaning structure, but the oral historical account mediates between the event and the pre-established forms of meaning and narrative in much the same way as White describes the process (White calls these forms tropes in his specific discussion of history and Western epistemology). White explains how these pre-critical mythic structures act as an icon to render events familiar:

> It seems to me that we must say of histories what Frye seems to think is true only of poetry or philosophy, namely that, considered as a system of signs, the historical narrative points in two directions simultaneously: *toward* the

> events described in the narrative and *toward* the story type or *mythos* which the historian has chosen to serve as the icon of the structure of events. The narrative itself is not the icon; what it does is *describe* events in the historical record in such a way as to inform the reader *what to take as an icon* of the events so as to render them "familiar" to him. The historical record thus mediates between the events on one side and the pregenric plot structures conventionally used in our culture to endow unfamiliar events and situations with meaning, on the other. (*Tropics* 88)

In order completely to understand oral historical discourse, the question then becomes not whether or not if there are mythological icons informing an oral historical narrative, but what are they and how might they have influenced actions as well as discourse in emotionally and perceptually charged events such as first contact between native groups and European explorers.

While the end of the Tlingit story may tempt some readers to conclude that our concepts of history and myth have been vindicated, the on-going oral tradition of stories chronicling the interactions between the Russians and Raven continue to blur those distinctions. This aspect of oral tradition leads de Laguna to conclude that there is an indeterminate area called legendary history, but more precisely, what she was seeing was the process of mythic troping.

The following first-contact narrative recorded among the Ahtna suggests that mythic troping may occur at the deepest level of precritical structuring. It recounts the arrival of the first Russians to Southern Alaska. The Russians are coming up the Copper River. As they do so, they find the local headmen along the way and whip them in order to establish dominance over them. After they whip the first chief, a boy from upriver walks out to check his traps and hears sobbing. He listens carefully and it sounds like a person. He returns to his grandmother and brings the news to her. "'It didn't sound like an animal. I hear a person sobbing'" (Kari 77). The boy expresses confusion at hearing a grown man, a chief, cry. He thinks it might have been an animal. What miraculous event could make a chief cry? The community is warned, but no action is taken. Unprecedented social phenomena might have been suggested, but at this point, only careful observation will allow the essence of the event to reveal itself. Its mythic foundations are unseen and must emerge before complete understanding is achieved.

The Russians repeat their cultural violations of the nature of human interaction and hospitality when they whip another chief. The chief asks them if they know whom they are whipping. "You are doing

this to Yalniil Ta 'Father of He Is Carrying It.' Do you know you are doing this to someone who is vicious?" (Kari 78). He calls out his personal name to challenge their right to act this way. Who are they? Are their names and positions higher than his? How do they fit into the social world of human interrelations and interactions? In response, the Russians take the men's weapons, enslave the women and turn the men out naked and unarmed to freeze. They treat them like animals, and have forfeited the right to be treated equally in the world of Ahtna social responsibility.

Taken in by other Ahtnas, the humiliated men engage in a dialogue over what they should do, but their conversation takes the ritual form of making medicine, joining their medicine power with other Ahtna to see how they should understand these events and thus act. When the spirit world signs are favorable, they decide to move in on the Russians. An Athabaskan who had been serving as an unsympathetic guide for the Russians, C'uket Ta', helps the Ahtna, counseling them as to the appropriate time to attack. He holds them back until the time is right, saying, "It would be difficult meat. You should wait!" (Kari 84). C'uket Ta's warning reminds the Ahtna that before the voices of the spirit world are heard, attack would not be appropriate. The Ahtnas allow the spirit world to control the structure of events for many reasons, one of which is that their response will need to merge with a mythological template for experience, because their act will become part of a complex relationship between humans, animals, and myth. The Russians have crossed the line dividing humans and animals; they have forced others to cross, and as such, they can now be hunted like meat. At Batzulnetas (Roasted Salmon Creek) the whole Russian party is killed.

On a clear social level, the narrative of the killing of the Subrenikov party has precedent in a number of war stories that the Ahtna tell about their warfare with the Eskimo groups of the Kodiak peninsula. The narrative pattern is established where the Eskimos come up the river, raiding, burning caches, and stealing slaves (Kari; de Laguna, "Ahtna"). In Ahtna historical thinking, it is axiomatic that troublemakers come up the Copper River, that they commit atrocities, and that they can be followed and killed with little thought of the web of human social interactions which this might upset. This prestructuring device does not seem to require any mythological troping on the part of the Ahtna. As a historical narrative, the unfamiliar is conveniently set in a familiar structure of intertribal warfare.

Yet behind this surface level we may still see the blurring of the Western distinction between "real" and "imaginary" in a story of "The

Tailed Ones" which forms a pre-critical template for the killing of the Russians. The Ahtnas appear to make a distinction between what we would call history and myth on the basis of geographical place. A narrative which is said to have happened at a particular location is seen as historical, while narrative not associated with a known place is said to be a traditional story from long ago. However, the Cet'aenn stories offer the non-Ahtna reader a window into the mythic presuppositions and pre-critical thought structure which helped mold the Ahtnas' actions, actions which do not exist solely on the level of revenge. The Cet'aenn narrative is an exception to the Ahtna rule. It tells of what would appear to be mythical creatures, but in a specific geographic location, a location strongly linked with migration stories and war stories which are always considered to be historical. Consequently, these stories and beings hold a place in Ahtna thinking that supercedes even their own distinction between myth and history.

The Cet'aenn were ape-like beings with long tails but human-like faces and hands. These beings lived long ago until the Ahtna destroyed them all. A lone Ahtna, hunting in the area of Batzulnetas, is killed by "The Tailed Ones." A second hunter sees them playing with the head of the slain Ahtna. He returns to tell of the beings, observing that when it rains, they run for cover into their caves. The Ahtna would like to attack, and the medicine men call forth rain. When they have the Cet'aenn trapped in the cave, they set fire to the surrounding bushes and throw them into the cave. The fire heats the obsidian rocks which abound in the cave until they explode, sending sharp shrapnel-like pieces throughout the cave and killing all of the Cet'aenn. The Ahtna then discover a stream teeming with salmon and an excellent housing site. They set up their new village called "Roasted Salmon Place."

A couple of observations are immediately apparent. Behind the story of the killing of the Russians we see the story of warfare with the Eskimos, but also the Cet'aenn story in which the Ahtna now are the invaders from downriver. The strange new beings that they find threaten the Ahtna social order, in much the same way that the Russians and Ahtna threatened each other's social orders. The Cet'aenn can only be killed with the help of the medicine men and the spirit world, just as killing the Russians requires the help of the spirit world. The destruction of the Cet'aenn resulted in a rich new village for the Ahtna, and a natural assumption, based on the mythic insight, would be that, if allowed, the Russians could kill all the Ahtna and acquire the riches of "Roasted Salmon Place." It is not much of a leap to appreciate that the mythic imperative for the destruction of the Russians generates an expectation of significant beneficial results.

However, to say that the Cet'aenn story is behind the oral historical account may not be exactly precise; perhaps it is more appropriate to say as Ricoeur (143) suggests that myth is in front of the event, like blinds allowing the audience to see enough of the outline of events to recognize the mythic pattern which renders the event meaningful. The narrative then can be seen to "point both ways toward the event and toward mythos" as White suggests of Western historical accounts, but here the icon which renders the event familiar and thus meaningful is a mythic event not included in the text. Yet this mythic narrative functions as trope in oral tradition the same way that White's pregenric plot structures do for Western historical narratives.

Perhaps we can see how closely allied in oral tradition are the forms we call myth and history. In the Tlingit narrative, the event calls forth a testing of myth as content of the narrative, while in the Ahtna story, myth predisposes the form of the story and maybe even more significantly the event itself. As White discusses historical narratives he notes the affiliation between myth, literature, and history

> because the systems of meaning production shared by all three are distillates of the historical experience of a people, a group, a culture. And the knowledge provided by narrative history is that which results from the testing of the systems of meaning production originally elaborated in myth and refined in the alembic of the hypothetical mode of fictional articulation. (*Content* 45)

Oral historical narratives may function in White's sense of literature by refining and distilling meaning originally developed in more mythic narratives. Yet we must remember that in a sense all oral narratives are "historical" in that they retell what are believed to be true events.

There are no categories in Ahtna or Tlingit which correspond to our conception of fiction. First contact narratives present events where the testing of meaning production comes to the forefront. At those moments, gaps open up between the seen world and the unseen world, between the familiar and the unfamiliar. At those moments, the mythic pregenric structures may be called to the forefront as now the screen is noticed as well as the phenomena seen through the screen. Moments of the greatest epistemological crises create moments of active mythological inquiry; moments which are problematic and unfamiliar require the deepest levels of mythological thought. Mythological troping may illuminate more than just narratives; "objective" events themselves have perplexing story natures.

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FROM CREATION STORIES TO '49 SONGS:
CulturalTransactions with the White World as Portrayed in Northern Plains Indian Story and Song

By Joseph E. DeFlyer

The general theme of this paper is that "contact" between mainstream American culture and the Native American cultures in the Northern Plains was not only a set of specific historical events, but in the most meaningful sense, "contact" is the total historical and cultural process of communication that started considerably before the first written records, and that continues even up to the present. Despite having lived along side each other for many generations, people of these two broad cultural groupings, Indian and non-Indian, still continue to suffer from a real and tangible "gap" of understanding, one which has been bridged from the Indian side as much, or more, than it has been bridged from the non-Indian side. Thus I am picturing "contact" as a cross-cultural process, with both historical and ongoing parameters.

In that context, I would like to present some examples of what I feel are remarkably creative adaptations of American Indian stories and songs to new situations, and to new neighbors. I see this as part of a cultural transaction which seeks first of all to refine the attitudes of one's own people toward what has often been an unfortunate history, and secondarily to reach out and communicate differences and disagreements with the other side. Of course, in this case, as in many others, the transaction is not really complete until those on the non-Indian side of the cultural gap pay attention, and seriously acknowledge the efforts that have been made, and the results that have come about, on the Indian side. Cultural contact is always a two-way street, which at best, involves full mutual respect.

The first text I discuss is a Hidatsa creation story. The Hidatsa are a small Northern Plains tribe whose language belongs to the Siouan language family and who are close relatives of the Crows. The Hidatsa were referred to as the Gros Ventre until 1943, when their council changed their official name to the more appropriate Hidatsa. They are not related to the Montana tribe referred to as the Gros Ventre. Before European diseases severely diminished their numbers, the Hidatsa were a substantial tribe of earth-lodge dwellers along the Missouri River in what is now North Dakota. During those early times, the earth-lodge tribes were the "urban" people of the northern plains; they were traders, businessmen, and agriculturalists, with their sizeable villages located strategically in the center of a huge

Northern Plains trading area. Currently, the Hidatsa are a part of the legal entity known as the Three Affiliated Tribes, made up of the Mandan, the Hidatsa, and the Arikara. With these other tribes they jointly possess the sizeable Fort Berthold Indian reservation in central North Dakota, in the northeastern corner of the vast territory which was once acknowledged to belong to these tribes. Despite the drastic population loss and the ravages of forced acculturation, a good deal of their culture is alive, and functioning quite well.

This Hidatsa creation story is entitled "Lone Man and First Creator Make the World." (The full text of this version is included in the appendix.) The story was told and recorded by Mr. John Brave in 1978, and published by Mary College in a volume titled "Earth Lodge Tales from the Upper Missouri," edited by Parks, Jones, and Hollow in that same year (Parks 67-70). This version is one of several similar Mandan and Hidatsa creation stories in which two creator figures shape the earth. Hidatsa oral tradition also includes stories about the emergence of the people from the earth and a separate story about the descent of a creator and his people from the spiritual world to form one of the Hidatsa groups. This John Brave version of the dual-creator story, like most other versions, begins with a "diving" episode, in which the world is covered with water, and the earth is created from some mud brought up from the bottom by a duck. After this, the two creators get together to shape the earth into its present form.

In this version, Lone Man does things in a very good manner, and his creations become identified with the traditional Hidatsa and Mandan lifestyle. Lone Man also takes the lead in evaluating what the two creators have done. First Creator, on the other hand, acts in a more Trickster-like mode,[1] creating features of this world that are of more debatable value and which, in fact, become identified with the white man's lifestyle. Each creator figure goes in a different direction from the Missouri River. Lone Man goes south and creates all the "best" land, where there are hills, creeks, sheltered bottom-lands with wood for fuel, fresh water, and lots of game. First Creator goes north and creates flat land with no trees or creeks, and no shelter from the weather. He creates the prairie potholes, with bad-tasting water, and only waterfowl for game. When the two creators together go to look over the animals that each has made, this is what they find on the north side of the river:

> Where they went, there were what today they call white man's cattle. Some had very long horns and some were all colors: some were roan, some spotted, some were bay, and some black. There were all kinds of cattle. Some had

> such crooked horns that the horns covered their eyes, and one bull had such large testicles that when he walked he was bow-legged.
>
> Looking at them, Lone Man said, "What you have made is no good." Then he continued, "On the other side of this water there is a different land. There I'll put them and the future generations can use them in days to come." First Creator said, "All right," and Lone Man took that multitude of cattle and put them in the other land. (Parks 69)

In this version of the story, First Creator agrees that Lone Man's creations are the best, and that his are faulty; so First Creator then "breaks up" that flat land on the north side of the river with his heel, to make a few springs and at least a little timber, whereupon they both agree that it will be better for future generations.

Then they go forth to look over the land again:

> When they went, the animals that are called wolves were there, and one of them was dead. They arrived and looked at it. All over it was nothing but maggots, and the maggots had red heads. "Did you make this?" asked Lone Man. "No, I never made such a thing," replied First Creator. "No, I never made such a thing either," Lone Man said. Then he went on, "I'll take these maggots and put them across on the other side of the lake. In the days to come, they'll have intelligence." When he had said this,Lone Man scraped up all the maggots and left them across on the other side of the lake. And today when you see white men, some of whom have red heads, they are the descendants of those maggots. And today these white men are very intelligent,as it was promised. Today they are doing everything, even all those things which seem impossible. (Parks 67-70)

In the division of labor between the two creator figures, Lone Man creates the type of land and animals allied with the traditional Hidatsa and Mandan lifestyle of limited floodplain farming and fairly extensive hunting, while First Creator creates the type of land and animals allied with the modern whiteman's lifestyle of mechanical farming, and fenced, more intensive stock grazing. The tone of the story is light-hearted and satirical, though some people can, indeed, become angered or hurt by the reference to the red-headed maggots as the progenitors of the white people.

But the main emphasis of the story is not to insult anyone in a mean way, but rather to make some basic distinctions in a humorous way. The story can be seen to express a sincere affection for the

traditional habitat and way of life of the Hidatsa people, as well as some humorous distaste for certain aspects of the modern lifestyle brought by the white man. The story can also be related to the continuing history of white-Indian contact from the point of view of the Hidatsa and Mandan, since the northeast corner of the reservation, which is indeed mostly flat with potholes, was lost to white ownership during allotment days, it being much more suitable to large-scale modern farming methods than the hilly and wooded southwest side. Some of the most satirical details of this creation story may indeed date from that allotment era. The story, in effect, makes light of the loss of those flat lands, which, it is implied, were not places where the Indian people wanted to live anyway.

From what we know about the pre-contact history of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara, it seems clear that they were wealthy, powerful, and reasonably happy. After contact, their condition slowly deteriorated. Their history of cultural contacts with white men involve few armed conflicts, but increasingly terrible epidemics, land loss, restrictive treaties, and forced acculturation. From one point of view, the history provides ample reason why the stories might portray the white man as descended from red-headed maggots which, in this version, neither creator claims as his creation! At first, the white men were only visitors; then, they were equals; after a while, they became overbearing, and then they tried to take whatever they wanted, including, finally, even the very best land, the Missouri River bottomlands, flooded by Garrison Dam in the 1950s.

Thus, it seems, there are parallels between the recent oral tradition and the recent history of dispossession. The white man can indeed be seen to have acted in a Trickster-like manner, and perhaps a maggot-like manner, toward the Three Tribes during the history of their contact. However, upon closer examination of the history and cultures involved, it becomes clear that this explanation, while meaningful, is insufficient by itself.

First of all, we find that the above story text is only one of well over a dozen readily available written versions of the Mandan-Hidatsa dual creator story. Only one other early version, recorded by E. S. Curtis in 1909 (39 ff.), assigns the dual creator roles and order of precedence in the manner that John Brave does, and that version also omits any mention of the creation of the white men and the white men's cattle. All known versions that include the two creators also include the basic story of how one made the poorer north side of the river and the other one made the better south side; but nearly all of these versions say that Lone Man created the poorer flat land on the north, and First Creator created the good country on the south . . .

which is just the opposite of the John Brave version, and of the Curtis version referred to above. Similarly, many other versions tell about the creation of the cattle, but most early versions assign the creation of the cattle to Lone Man rather than to First Creator. Thus the Curtis version and the recent versions such as John Brave and Otter Sage[2] (3) demonstrate a deliberate reversal of roles for the dual creators! Only a few of these stories mention the creation of the white men, but there is an earlier version which also portrays the white man as descended from the white maggots crawling on a dead wolf. That version also quotes First Creator as saying to Lone Man, "You have made a queer kind of men,---they will always be greedy!" (Beckwith 16-17). Thus the John Brave version appears to draw upon all of these former lines of thought, to "place" the white man and his things in a slightly different category within the sacred stories of the people, something more appropriate for our contemporary times and the conflicts that have taken place in recent decades.

It is also probable that the relatively recent Indian/non-Indian cross cultural conflict is not the first such conflict that has been worked out on the stage of the Mandan-Hidatsa sacred story. Apparently, the many dual-creator stories that have been recorded during the last century and a half are to some extent combinations of both Mandan and Hidatsa elements. It is fairly likely that the original Mandan stories centered around Lone Man and that the original Hidatsa stories put a greater emphasis on First Creator, the diving story, and the other Hidatsa origin legends. Gilbert Wilson states that "One-man is the Patron of the Mandan, and First Worker of the Hidatsa in the mythology of the two tribes" (Wood 104). Bowers felt that the dual creator episode itself was essentially Mandan, expressing the moiety structure of Mandan society, while the diving story and the First Creator elements were essentially Hidatsa (77, 297 ff). It is also likely that the contest between the two creators, as portrayed in many stories, good-naturedly reflects the changing relationship between the two tribes through several centuries of history. By trying to understand how these tribes interacted with each other over the last few centuries, and modified their sacred stories to reflect their new interrelationship, it may be possible to come to understand how and why these tribes seem to have once again modified their sacred stories to accommodate to their new neighbors, the white people.

Judging from oral tradition and archeological evidence, it seems fairly certain that pre-contact inter-tribal relationships throughout most of our continent's interior consisted of a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of migrations, alliances, and generally quite competitive relationships between tribes, villages, and nomadic bands. In that

context, the present Three Affiliated Tribes were certainly not always allies; in fact, they were not even living in the same area until a few centuries ago. Let us look more closely at their history.

The Mandan are likely to have been the first of the three tribes to have taken up the earth lodge style of living on the upper Missouri. Agriculturalists apparently moved into the area from further east around 900 A.D., and it is felt that these people were probably ancestors of the Siouan-language-speaking Mandans (Meyer 5). By 1200 A.D. these people were well established along the Missouri River, alternately living in sites ranging from the Knife River in North Dakota to the Bad River and Cheyenne River in South Dakota.

At about the same time, the Caddoan-language-speaking ancestors of the Arikaras were developing their earth lodge pattern of living further south, in the central plains. After 1400, they began to move north, into what is now South Dakota, and the Mandan apparently moved further north, leaving a buffer zone between themselves and their southern rivals (Meyer 7).

The three distinct Siouan-language-speaking groups who were the ancestors of the Hidatsas are known to have been living in the general area of central and eastern North Dakota during roughly the same periods we have been discussing. One of these groups, the Awatixa, believes that it has always lived north of the Mandans along the Missouri River, and archeologists offer no convincing evidence to doubt that assertion (Wood 34-36). Another of these groups, the Awaxawi, apparently moved west from the area of the Red River of the North and its tributary, the Cheyenne, in eastern North Dakota, to the Missouri River area, probably arriving there somewhere between 500 and 250 years ago and making friends with the Mandans in the Heart river area, close to where Bismark, North Dakota is now located.[3] The other group, the Hidatsa proper, followed not long after, also making friends with the Mandans. Among these three groups, both the Awaxawi and the Hidatsa proper had a story concerning how the people emerged from the earth; the Hidatsa proper placed this emergence at Devils Lake in North Dakota. The Awatixa, on the other hand, had a story about Charred Body descending from the spiritual world to begin the Awatixa people (Wood 30-40). These stories about the origin of the people are of a different sort than the flood/diving/First Creator story about forming the earth into its present shape, which many tribes in the northern plains, including the Hidatsas and their relatives the Crows, have considered their own. All three of these "Hidatsa" groups later built villages along the Missouri River in the Knife River area, just north of the Mandans (Meyer 10-11).

For the next two hundred years or so the Mandans and the Hidatsas, despite having similar lifestyles, languages, basic friendship, and lots of intermarriage, retained a competitive relationship, occasionally fighting over small matters. Slowly, they became more and more closely allied, and as they did, it appears that their sacred systems and the stories that expressed these systems began to merge. The relationship of these two tribes with the Arikaras was even more competitive, and it was only the terrible events of more recent history, such as the repeated epidemics, which pushed all three tribes into closer alliances.

The first recorded contact between white men and these tribes was by La Verendrye in 1738; however, it is fairly clear that there was limited contact before this as well, both from the Spanish to the south and the French to the north. The French were operating their trade network through the voyageur route up the St. Lawrence and across the Great Lakes, while the Englishmen who had received the huge Hudson's Bay Grant were at first engaged in a more limited trade network centered on Hudson's Bay itself. Apparently, Indian trade routes were already well established throughout the plains and mountain areas, and these tied together a number of Indian trade centers, indirectly stretching clear to the West Coast. When European trade goods became available, trade increased even more. Both the Arikara villages further to the south and the Hidatsa and Mandan villages served as centers of trade. Also during the 1700s the French and Spanish trading traffic up the Missouri was steadily increasing. It was later, during the 1800s, that the American traffic up the Missouri River became significant (Meyer cap. 1-5). Of course, our written records about all of this early history, and about the first contacts, present primarily the point of view of the explorers, the incoming Europeans and Americans. Fortunately, they also recorded some of the oral history available at the time from the native people, and this is now very useful in reconstructing the full historical context.

Indications are that these Indian people, since they identified as tribes, villages, or bands, not as Indians, at first tended to see and treat these different nationalities of white men as essentially other tribes. Often they were friendlier to the white men than to neighboring tribes with whom they had been rivals for many years. Yet it appears that most of the inter-tribal warfare that went on was a limited sort of conflict, conducted according to conventions of warfare that the tribes had informally agreed upon for many centuries. In this context, each tribe maintained a shifting set of alliances and rivalries with its neighbors. The alliances between the Mandan and the Hidatsa were very close, as such alliances go. The alliances of these

two tribes with the Arikara were less close and of more recent origin. All three tribes followed a similar earth lodge style of living, but this did not dictate the pattern of their alliances. They were often competitive with each other, as well as being in competition with the "nomadic" tribes in the region such as the Sioux to the south and the Assiniboin to the north. To the west were the Crow, very close relatives of the Hidatsa, with whom the Hidatsa maintained fairly cordial relations even though they had argued before splitting apart.

When the disastrous epidemics of the 1700s and 1800s arrived, the earth lodge tribes were forced into closer alliances. The epidemics were less hard on the nomads of the plains, such as the Sioux, than on the village Indians. The changes in warfare that resulted from guns, and the increased pressure on the eastern tribes which tended to crowd many tribal people together out on the plains, were also harder on the village Indians than on the nomadic peoples. The smallpox epidemic of 1837 was closely observed and recorded, but there are only scanty records of the earlier epidemics. It is obvious, though, that the total population loss for the village Indians from all these causes was truly catastrophic, reducing their numbers from many thousands to only a few hundred in the late 1800s.

Thus, when the treaties were signed, the three tribes were willing to band together to try to preserve their territories and lifestyles. Some members of the three tribes also served as scouts for the U.S. Army, feeling it was to their advantage to cooperate with the new government against their old rivals. The remnants of these three tribes tried to continue their former lifestyle in small towns (such as Like-a-Fishhook village) located in the Missouri River bottomlands. The reservation they received was sizeable, and indications are that their lifestyle in the early villages was working quite well, even after the churches and government fully implemented their forced acculturation policies. Even the Indian villages of the later 1800s, such as the agency town of Elbowoods, apparently retained a definite Indian cultural set of values which was only superficially modelled on their white neighbors' example. During the years after the 1887 General Allotment Act, the allotment policy also had the negative effect of scattering the people out, which even more severely damaged the close-knit ceremonial and social aspects of their culture.

Even after the allotment policy was ended in the 1930s, the tribes encountered another unfriendly force demanding still more of their land, this time the land that they valued most, their bottomland. During the 1930s, discussions began about building dams on the Missouri for irrigation and flood control. Several different plans were drawn up, with very little Indian input, and after severe flooding took

place further down the Missouri in 1943, Congress passed a combination of two of the plans, commonly referred to as the Pick-Sloan Act, though actually titled the Flood Control Act of 1944. The act called for the construction of Garrison Dam and the flooding of most of the fertile bottomlands. Official negotiations with the Three Affiliated Tribes began, and continued for several years, with the tribes fighting a hopeless battle to stop the dam and the government trying to buy out the tribes with a variety of different proposals, some of which included land to replace what was being taken. In the end, the tribes lost their land and received a cash settlement, part of which was paid out in a series of per capita payments to the individual members of the tribes. Ironically, the final settlement was probably not as good as some of the offers they had received earlier. By 1954, the dam was completed, and the waters flooded the bottomlands, an extremely sad event for the people (Meyer cap. 6-11). As a result, the people were generally even more scattered, and further separated by the waters of the reservoir. However, even in this history, we can see the spirit of creative accommodation in the formation of the town of Mandaree, named after all three of the tribes: Man for Mandan, da for Hidatsa, and ree for the Rees, or Arikaras.

The foregoing historical sketch indicates, among other things, that during the last 500 years the Hidatsa slowly became more and more firmly allied with the Mandans, to the extent that their cultures became intertwined. Then, during the disastrous epidemics of the 18th and 19th centuries, this process rapidly accelerated, producing the present complex creation stories with both Mandan and Hidatsa elements. Several related points can be made.

First, history indicates that the tribes respectfully acknowledged each other, but still maintained a competitive relationship with each other for centuries. We can see both of these aspects reflected in the sacred stories and in the language surrounding them. In Mandan, Lone Man is Nu-mak-ma-hana (following Curtis's simple spelling), which has the solid meaning of the first man; First Creator is Ki-numak-shi, translated as He Becomes Chief, a phrase which implicitly gives him a secondary role. In Hidatsa, First Creator is the pre-eminent one. Washington Matthews says, "The Hidatsa worship a Deity whom they call Itsikamahidis, the First Made or the first in existence (*Grammar*). Lone Man is referred to as Matsedu Watsa. The majority of the dual-creator stories include the episode in which the two argue about who is the elder and settle it by a contest to see who can stay dead the longest. First Creator wins out by being the most Trickster-like, but in the majority of the older stories he still

tends to be the leader of the two; so the two really stay pretty even with each other in their competition, much like the two tribes.

Secondly, both Mandan and Hidatsa story-telling rules allow for deliberate modification of stories under certain conditions. Beckwith says,

> The old storytellers were very positive as to whether they were relating a Mandan or a Hidatsa myth, although similar incidents occurred interchangeably in each. One informant explained that the difference lay in the characters involved. It seemed then that out of the great wind bag, as the Indians say, of traditional story, incidents might be drawn rather freely if only they were put together with a strict view to their symbolic value. The myth must be true to the way in which the characters functioned in the group. (xv-xvi)

Bears Arm, a Hidatsa, says, "For these stories are like the branches of a tree. All go back to the main trunk (Beckwith 268). It appears that with proper mastery of the meaning, new versions are not only possible but permitted, and perhaps even encouraged when there is a need for them.

Thirdly, the way that First Creator and Lone Man have been compared with God and Jesus appears to have shifted over time. The Hidatsa narrator Mrs. White Duck in 1929 tells us,"Jesus was born on the other side of the world. The man who created this American continent belonged on this side. This man was named the First Creator, Itsi-ka-ma-hi-dsh" (Beckwith 15). However, John Brave in 1978 makes quite a different connection in his discussion of God in the old stories:

> Some days when the people were there, Lone Man would arrive and look around their campsite. The People knew he was God. Long ago, Lone Man was God. Today that's our way of saying it. We don't say Lone Man; we say God. Whenever he saw some children around the village, he always wiped their noses. For Lone Man was kind-hearted. First Creator, on the other hand, was always the one who fooled people. (Parks 71)

John Brave's way of approaching the subject seems to be fairly representative of the Fort Berthold people, especially the Mandan, today.

What we can perhaps conclude from the foregoing is that in the original inter-tribal context, there was enough mutual respect,

tolerance, and genuine ecumenical spirit between the Mandan and the Hidatsa so that the dual creators could both be acknowledged, with plenty of room for variations by individual storytellers. In more recent decades, after the accumulative effects of early Christian missionary ideas have really been felt, it may have become preferable to choose one Creator who could be allied with God, or Jesus, or both. And of the two, Lone Man then becomes the logical choice, for several reasons. Missionaries have seldom reacted well to the idea of a Trickster figure as a creator, no matter how much latent divinity is attributed to him. It takes an unusual missionary to approve of the sexual trickster tales, for example. Also, Lone Man parallels the outlines of the Jesus story in another way, in that he was here among the people, and then left, promising to return. Thus, if the people are to be able to say in a convincing way that yes, our ancestors believed in God and Jesus before the whites ever came here, then that belief is probably going to center on Lone Man. First Creator, of course, may still occupy a favored place in the hearts of many of the people.

We may never be able to know fully which elements of these stories are more Mandan and which are more attributable to the Hidatsa, even if we could fully map out the tribal origin of each narrator and where he or she learned that version. And even beyond this, there was undoubtably both individual and collective creativity exercised on the story versions to adapt the stories to current conditions, to express what the people needed to express at that particular time. Of course, the foregoing might be better stated by saying that throughout the tragic history of these tribes there was a continuing pattern of spiritual revelation and guidance which enabled the keepers of the sacred stories to express the ongoing spiritual reality of the people in a strong, vibrant and living fashion.

It is probably true that the reality being expressed by these stories has indeed changed over several centuries to reflect the changing sacred life of the people. At various times in the past, the changes were coming about because of the new tribal coalitions between the Mandan groups and the Hidatsa groups; more recently, the changes have come from the forced proximity, forced acculturation, and forced land loss resulting from overbearing white neighbors. However, in both cases, we find the sacred stories confidently absorbing the new conditions, and expressing traditional thoughts in fresh new ways within the preexisting story frameworks.

A few further examples of similar dynamics are worth noting. The first is the very nice layout of the creation of the earth's features in six days, with many nice biblical echoes, by the two creators, as

narrated by Butterfly, a Hidatsa, in 1910, and recorded by Gilbert Wilson (Wood 97-104). The seventh day is then used for the two creators to look over the dual creation and analyze its anomalies, something not done by the biblical creator. The second is the beautiful episode from the story recorded by E. S. Curtis in 1909 (42), in which Lone Man, deciding to make some beings like himself, goes to where the river meets the great water and takes a lower rib from each side of his body, forming from the right side a man and from the left side a woman. By doing so, of course, he effectively corrects, completely within the context of the sacred stories of the people, the somewhat sexist and patriarchic biblical episode wherein the biblical creator creates man first and then creates woman from one of man's ribs.

In summary, the different versions of these creation stories demonstrate the syncretic use of sacred tradition to bridge the gap of cross cultural contact between different peoples. Apparently, these creation stories underwent changes during the last few centuries that effectively merged the sacred thinking of these two tribes, the Hidatsa and the Mandan, in a very ecumenical fashion. And in the twentieth century, further changes have taken place which, even though they do poke fun at the whiteman's cattle and at the sort of terrain that the whiteman greedily wrested from Indian ownership, do also recognize and legitimize the cattle, and the whiteman himself, by weaving both of them into the very heart of the people's creation story. To match this, contemporary churchmen would have to be rewriting Genesis to incorporate Native American people and ideas . . . an unlikely event. Thus, what we find in these Hidatsa and Mandan creation stories is basically an affirmation of the past and the present, despite the tragic things that have happened, and a basic prescription for a good, though slightly satiric, attitude toward the newcomers. In short, the story tells how to live the good life by having a proper attitude toward life! There is a poignancy about this, and I think it is one that extends into a lot of other Indian culture in the modern age. The process of contact is still continuing.

In that same spirit, then, I would like to close by citing the tone and attitude of some entirely different materials, the lyrics of several songs, especially some contemporary '49 Songs.

The '49 song, of course, has been a popular type of song for parties and social dances not only throughout the plains but in many places around the country for several decades. It is a consciously eclectic form of song, in that it includes at least one phrase in English, which typically refers to the contemporary setting. The music is all Indian, but the lyrics and tone often relate to non-Indian

forms of music as well. For instance, some of the '49 songs about love are jokingly referred to by singers as "the love sick blues" or as "Indian Country-Western." One '49 song refers to the military draft system, with the English refrain saying, "Uncle Sam is calling me . . . ." Other, more serious sorts of songs such as the flag songs and some of the veterans' songs portray the pride of the Indian people in having willingly taken sides with the white men against a common enemy, while the '49 songs express a sadness and poignancy at the prospect of trying to keep Indian culture alive and humorous, despite the status of underdog in the most basic contemporary cultural transactions. There is a lot of sustained effort being put into cross-cultural communication from the Indian side of the cultural gap, effort which is largely unacknowledged on the other side of the gap.

One of the best known of all the '49 songs is the "one-eyed Ford" song, in which the English language refrain goes, "When the dance is over, sweetheart, I'll take you home in my one-eyed Ford . . . ." To hear these simple lyrics sung to a good rousing drumbeat is to be exposed to some key aspects of the real poignancy of the American Indian cultural situation during recent decades. So many changes have taken place, yet the core of the culture is still intact. Things have at times gotten better, and at other times they have gotten much worse, but through it all, it has been the Native Americans who have been asked to take the giant steps toward acculturation, not the mainstream Americans. And in response, Native Americans have often displayed remarkable powers of accommodation. Through an intense spiritual and creative energy, traditional tribal materials have been adapted to apply to new situations and new neighbors, without destroying the integrity and spirituality of the culture. I would like to end on this cheerful note, with the rhythm of the song in mind, looking forward to eventually seeing these cross-cultural contacts and transactions understood and absorbed by the non-Indian public of today, or of the future.

NOTES

[1]He is, in other contexts, Old Man Coyote himself.

[2]See Otter Sage, narrator, "The Creation" (Mandan version) in Parks *et al* 83.

[3]Raymond W. Wood, "Origins and Settlements of the Hidatsa," in Gilman and Schneider 322-27. The migration dates I give are derived from comparison of several other sources.

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APPENDIX

This English-language text is reprinted from *Earth Lodge Tales from the Upper Missouri* (ed. Parks, Jones, and Hollow, 67-70). Because of space and printing limitations the Hidatsa language text in the original publication has been omitted. Many thanks to Douglas Parks and Wesley Jones for their kind permission to use this text.

LONE MAN AND FIRST CREATOR MAKE THE WORLD
Told by John Brave

Long ago, all the earth was water. One who made the land was called Lone Man, and the other one was called First Creator. They were walking together above the water. They came to a duck and spoke with it. "What do you eat to exist around here?" they asked.

The duck said, "Under this water there is land down below. I dive and bring back sand. That is what I eat to exist around here."

Then Lone Man said, "All right, that will do. Go and bring back some earth."

"All right," said the duck. He dove and was gone a long time before he brought back a little. When Lone Man said, "Put it here," the duck put it in his hand. Then Lone Man said, "Go again!" and had the duck go four times.

There was not much earth, but only a little. Lone Man gave half to First Creator and kept half himself. Then he said, "You can make the land to the north, and I will make that to the south."

"All right," said First Creator, and right there they went in opposite directions.

Because they were holy, they made that small amount of earth increase. The river was their boundary, this very river of ours. "From there you make the land to the north, and I will make that to the south," said Lone Man, and First Creator said, "All right."

Already they had gone in two directions, and then they made the earth. They made everything. Timber, springs, animals--they made everything. They were there for a long time and then they came together again. When Lone Man asked, "How is it?" First Creator said, "I made a great deal of good land. When the future generations are around here, they will have no difficulties."

"All right," said Lone Man, "we'll look it over. First we'll look at your works." "All right," said First Creator. Lone Man looked at First Creator's work. To the north he had made flat land and many good lakes. When Lone Man asked, "Where are all the animals you made?" First Creator said, "They're over here."

When they went, there were what today they call white man's cattle. Some had very long horns and some were all colors: some were roan, some spotted, some were bay, and some black. There were all kinds of cattle. Some had such crooked horns that the horns covered their eyes, and one bull had such large testicles that when he walked he was bow-legged.

Looking at them, Lone Man said, "What you have made is no good." Then he continued, "On the other side of this water there is a different land. There I'll put them and the future generations can use them in days to come." First Creator said, "All right," and Lone Man took that multitude of cattle and put them in the other land. Then he said, "Now we'll look at the land I made and at my Works," and First Creator said, "All right."

They went, and then they looked over the land. Lone Man had made all the springs along all the hillsides. He had made cut-banks and high banks and lots of timber. "This way, even when it's cold, the generations around here in days to come will have plenty of timber and lots of windbreaks," Lone Man said. There were buffaloes, and he said, "These are the animals which I created." He made everything. Lone Man made all the animals around today. Buffalo, elk, bears, mountain lions--Lone Man made everything.

First Creator agreed that Lone Man's works were good. Then Lone Man explained, "What you made is no good. You made the

land too flat. The way you've done it, when future generations are around here in the winter, what will be their shelter? What will be their timber? You have not made any. If there were timber, they could make a fire and have shelter. And you have made no springs. Rather, you have made large lakes everywhere. When it gets cold and the lakes freeze, where will the people get water?"

"All right," said First Creator, "it will be made right again. I will fix it up." With his heel, he broke that flat land to bits. Then he made some springs and some timber. Then Lone Man said, "It's good that you've made it this way, for, in days to come, future generations will have no difficulties when they're around here."

Then they said, "It's done. We'll look over the land again." When they went, the animals that are called wolves were there, and one of them was dead. They arrived and looked at it. All over it was nothing but maggots, and the maggots had red heads. "Did you make this?" asked Lone Man. "No, I never made such a thing," replied First Creator. "No, I never made such a thing either," Lone Man said. Then he went on, "I'll take these maggots and put them across on the other side of the lake. In the days to come, they'll have intelligence." When he had said this, Lone Man scraped up all the maggots and left them across on the other side of the lake. And today when you see white men, some of whom have red heads, they are the descendants of those maggots. And today these white men are very intelligent, as it was promised. Today they are doing everything, even all those things which seem impossible.

As they went along that way, they said, "We must go in opposite directions," and then they were traveling.

Some days when the people were there, Lone Man would arrive and look around their campsite. The people knew that he was God. Long ago, Lone Man was God. Today that's our way of saying it. We don't say Lone Man; we say God. Whenever he saw some children around the village, he always wiped their noses. For Lone Man was kind-hearted. First Creator, on the other hand, was always the one who fooled people.

* * * *

COMMENTARY

FROM THE EDITORS

To inaugurate our second year we are pleased to present two of the papers from the 1989 MLA session on "Encounters in the Oral Tradition: Native American Stories of Cultural Contact." In "The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Dead" Jim Ruppert discusses the cognitive contextualization of unforeseen and disruptive events in a myth-history frame of reference. Joe DeFlyer's "From Creation Stories to '49 Songs" examines some plains views of intercultural contact and transactions over a period of centuries. We are especially grateful to Franchot Ballinger for arranging the session and for initiating their contributions to *SAIL*.

Readers of this journal can look forward to creative work by over 20 poets and fiction writers in our next issue, including new work by Maurice Kenny, Charlotte DeClue, Lance Henson and Ron Welburn. The issues on classical literature, *Storyteller* and pedagogy are going forward, and we are projecting future special issues devoted to women's voices, autobiography, poetry and early written literature. As always, we welcome suggestions, comments and contributions.

Helen Jaskoski
Bob Nelson

NATIVE AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Recognizing that significant tension has arisen between the archaeological and Native American communities over the past decade, and acknowledging the acute difficulties still facing Indians who seek higher education, the Native American Scholarship Fund has been established to foster a new sense of shared purpose and positive interaction. Specifically, this enterprise seeks to raise private donations and subsequent matching revenues to assist and encourage qualified American Indians in pursuing graduate education in the field of American archaeology.

Complete or partial royalties have also been assigned to the Nartive American Scholarship Fund from several sources, including Brian Swann's forthcoming anthology of articles on translating American Indian texts. The Committee is now asking all scholars writing about American Indian themes to consider donating all or part of the resulting royalties to the Native American Scholarship Fund. We think that matching funds solicited from private foundations and appropriate government sources will be made available on a two-or three-fold basis.

Those interested in contributing funds, suggestions, or counsel to this project are encouraged to communicate directly with David Hurst Thomas, Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York NY 10024.

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REVIEWS

Summer in the Spring: Ojibway Lyric Poems and Tribal Stories. Gerald Vizenor, ed. Minneapolis: The Nodin Press, 1981. 157 pp., $6.95 paper, ISBN 0-931714-15-X.

The major components of *Summer in the Spring* are the poems and stories indicated in the title. Pictomyths, interpretive notes, page notes, and an introduction complete the presentation. Forty pages of intermingled lyric poems and pictomyths, ". . . pictures of ideas, vision, and presentient dreams" (12), some of which are elucidated in the page notes, follow the introduction. The pictomyths in this book "are enlarged photographic reproductions of the original . . . published . . . by Frances Densmore . . ." (139-140). In *Chippewa Music* (BAE 1910) Densmore refers to them as mnemonics (15) and labels them song pictures throughout that text. The descriptive word "pictomyth" is Vizenor's.

In the Anishinaabeg tradition ". . . the idea of the song must always remain the same . . ." (*Chippewa Music* 14), but the speaker has freedom of expression to create that same image. Vizenor's lyrics, which reexpress a selection of the songs first published by Densmore, immediately call to mind the Japanese haiku. Though they do not follow the seventeen-syllable haiku convention, these lyrics assuredly do point to a thing or a pairing of things in nature that move the poet, and their appearance is similar to that of haiku. Vizenor evokes vibrant images:

> thoughts of revenge
> soaring
> across the sky
> when we are dancing
> around a dakota scalp (44)

and

> the clear sky
> resounds
> when I come

making a sound

the clear sky
loves to hear me sing. (27)

Densmore says, "An interesting fact concerning Chippewa songs is that the melody is evidently considered more important than the words" (2). That there are no words to some of the songs confirms this. The idea, however, is introduced and recapitulated before and after the singing of or playing of the song. This is further evinced by looking at the words of the Song of a Scalp Dance from which the first poem above is reexpressed:

Some will be envious
Who are in the sky
I am dancing around
A man's scalp. (99)

Look again at the second poem above. The words Densmore attributes to it are "The sky loves to hear me" (204). These words may be sung over and over.

The arrangement of the lyrics is pleasing. The one lyric per page is sometimes accompanied by a pictomyth. The print is quite large, and those poems on the left-hand page are left justified while those on the right-hand are right justified.

The stories of the Anishinaabeg here edited and reexpressed by Gerald Vizenor are from the oral tradition, "not objective collections and interpretations of historical facts [but rather] dream circles, visual images and oratorical gestures showing the meaning between the present and the past . . ." (15); thus ". . . there are as many versions as there are story tellers" (14).

Vizenor credits his great uncle John Clement Beaulieu, a mixed blood Anishinaabe who lived on the reservation, with first printing these stories "almost a century ago in 'The Progress', which was a weekly newspaper published on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota" (15-16). The tales present the history and customs of the Anishinaabeg through the guise of a grandfather relating tribal beliefs to his grandchild. They could, of course, stand alone as a simple collection, but there is an added authenticity in the traditional passing on of the heritage. Also Vizenor uses "anishinaabeg" and "the people" pointing out in the Interpretive Notes that Ojibway and Chippewa, more recognizable to the novice, are "invented names" (134).

Creation, the significance of dreams, male and female rites of passage, the importance of animals are but a few of the areas represented in the sixteen tales. The tribal trickster is introduced as

are punishments, courtship and marriage practices, religious initiations, and the source of fire.

This book is intended for the reader new to Indian lore. Vizenor presents much background material necessary for the novice; however, the format is at times confusing. Indian words are defined when they first appear, but a glossary for future reference would be helpful. Some of the pictomyths are explicated in the page notes and others on the page where they appear. I would prefer this approach for the poems as well.

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Tony Hillerman. Fred Erisman. Boise State Western Writers Series No. 87. Boise, ID: Boise State University, 1989. $3.95 paper, ISBN 0-88430-086-2.

Tony Hillerman, number 87 in the Western Writers Series, provides a creditable overview of the author's life and work, including his journalistic essays. Most of the discussion, naturally, is focused on Hillerman's eight loosely connected novels involving the Navajo Tribal Police and incidents arising from the pressures of interracial interactions on the Navajo Reservation. Hillerman's characters, Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee, receive considerable attention, and Erisman traces their development through the course of the eight works.

Hillerman, a non-Indian, has become an extremely popular writer of a unique kind of mystery fiction: besides being a good writer, he situates most of his stories in Indian Country (mostly on the Navajo Reservation) and provides a surprisingly accurate depiction of current Navajo life and worldview, the details of which become central to the mystery. Thus, the reader must pick up some ethnographic signals and a sense of Native logic in order to understand the story and to appreciate its resolution--a requirement which might easily deter or bore the inattentive or superficial reader of popular fiction.

How Hillerman manages this task so well and where he learned the Navajo (and Hopi and Zuñi) details so fully are issues that cry out for discussion, but they are not taken up in this slim book. Nor is the equally provocative matter of Hillerman's persistent variations from standard Navajo orthography in key words he uses. Granted

that the diacritical marks necessary for representing Navajo sounds on paper would be prohibitive in cost (and probably pointless for the typical reader) and granted that the difference between *ch'indi* (malevolent spirit of a deceased person) and Hillerman's *chindi* is too minor to quibble about, still some of his orthography would suggest that he does not know what the words really sound like: he uses *hozro* instead of *hozho* (beauty, stability, harmony), *yataalii* for *hataalii* (singer, "medicine man"), *belagana* for *bilagaana* (American white person)--to name a few terms referred to innocently by Erisman. Normally I would not fault anyone for not knowing the Navajo language, but how can someone so richly familiar with the Navajo way of life be so unfamiliar with common terms in the language? Is there a discrepancy of importance here, or does it show that Hillerman gets odd information as well as insight from his sources? As a dimension of his writing, this could be an important subject to look into, but Erisman's study does not touch on it.

This unexamined area, plus some other weaknesses (for example, Erisman's confusion of the terms *myth* and *legend*, and his use of *shaman* in reference to the Navajo singer--who obtains his ceremonies from learning and study, not from a traumatic near-death experience) make this a relatively unrewarding book for the student of Native American literature or folklore, simply because the reader is likely to feel more acquainted than Erisman with the cultural and academic terrain and thus will have more penetrating questions to ask than those taken up here. The book does provide a brief and tidy overview of Hillerman's works plus a bibliography which could be quite helpful. There is some basic discussion of the problems in modern Indian identity, as personified by Jo e Leaphorn and Jim Chee, and Erisman perceptively points out that an idea considered positive by Anglos (like progress or success) may be for the Navajo "a matter of deep social and spiritual distress"; but the literary dramatization of these elements, which may be the very source of power in Hillerman's stories, is not discussed in depth. The scarcity of analysis here is not attributable to Erisman's lack of interest but to the overall series' goal, which is to provide basic biographical and bibliographical information. Even so, this treatment of Hillerman comes nowhere close to James Ruppert's nicely researched piece on D'Arcy McNickle (see review in *SAIL* 1, 3/4). At the price, Erisman's profile is a small bargain but not "must" reading for *SAIL*ers.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Joseph E. DeFlyer has taught American Indian literature, and a variety of other courses, in the Department of Indian Studies at the University of North Dakota since 1980, serving as chair from 1984 to 1988. UND has offered a Major since 1977, and its set of Indian programs draws many students. DeFlyer has been active in various aspects of this field for nearly 20 years.

Sharon M. Dilloway has an M.A. from San Diego State University; she is a teaching assistant at California State University Fullerton and assistant to the editor of *SAIL*.

James W. Ruppert has been chairperson of ASAIL, the Association for Study of American Indian Literatures, and has spearheaded the current move to incorporate ASAIL as an independent scholarly organization. His book on D'Arcy McNickle was reviewed in *SAIL* 1, 3/4. He teaches at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Barre Toelken is Director of the American Studies Graduate Program at Utah State University. During the 1950s he lived with a Navajo family in southern Utah, and since that time has published a number of articles on Navajo narrative and worldview.