

It is not so easy to explain the origin of the legend of the transformer Kokwē'la. This being is the son of the hog-fennel (*Peucedanum*), a plant which plays a most important part in the ceremonies of the tribes of lower Fraser River, but which, so far as I am aware, is not personified to any extent among them. I have not found any analogon of this legend among the neighboring tribes.

The fourth transformer is called "The Old Man," but it does not seem that there are many elaborate myths referring to him. The whole concept of the Old Man is so much like that of the Kootenay and Blackfeet, that I am rather inclined to consider these groups of tales as having a common origin. In order to establish this point, it will be necessary to investigate the transformer tales of the Shuswap and Okanagon, which are, however, only imperfectly known.

If the Qoā'qlqal legends and those of the Old Man are really of foreign origin, the numerous instances of contests between these beings may be explained very naturally as a result of comparisons of their powers. Numerous examples of this kind are known from the mediæval epics, in which the heroes of most heterogeneous groups of legends are made to struggle against each other. This is the leading idea of the tradition of the "Rosengarten," in which all the heroes of the old German tales appear, and compete against each other.

This theory is, however, acceptable only if we can prove that the tales of the Thompson River Indians really contain foreign elements. It may be well to discuss at least one of their legends rather fully with a view of establishing this important point. I select the Coyote tradition for this purpose.

We will begin our analysis with the story of Nli'ksentem (p. 21). It is not certain that the beginning of the story, in which it is told how the Coyote made boys out of clay, gum, and stone, has any analogy among the neighboring tribes. It is true that among the coast tribes a myth occurs in which the gum is presented as a man who is made to melt in the sun; but it occurs in entirely different connections, and it is doubtful if this incident in the Coyote tradition is directly related to the corresponding tale of the coast. The latter refers to the attempt of the Raven to obtain gum. He induces the gum-man to go fishing with him. He exposes him to the hot sun until he is melted.

The next incident of our tale, however, can be traced among many of the neighboring tribes. Coyote makes a tree, which he induces his son to climb. Then he makes the tree grow until it reaches the sky. The inducement held out to the boy is a nest of eagles on the top of the tree. The Ponca¹¹ tell the same incident. They relate, how Ishtinike makes a tree, and induces his friend to climb it in