

implied by the incidents of the story. I think that in all probability if Indian mythologies were available in their pure original form, the egotistic character of the transformer would appear very much more strongly than is the case at present.

Such criticism must, however, be applied most sparingly, because the plausibility of our theory may induce us to reject evidence on account of its incongruity with the theory. It seems, however, justifiable to suggest to collectors of myths the desirability of paying particular attention to the motives ascribed to the culture hero and to investigate if his character is that of a pure egotist in other regions and among other tribes than those mentioned before. If this should prove to be the case, I should be inclined to consider the theory that has been suggested here as well established.

The traditions of the Thompson River Indians, as recorded by Mr. Teit, show a peculiar development of the transformer myths. There are at least four distinct personages who may be considered as culture heroes or transformers. The most important one among them is the Coyote, around whom a great many traditions cluster. In his case the peculiar mixture of characteristics described on the preceding pages is very marked. He is a being of great power; he performed many feats in consequence of which the world assumed its present shape. A great many local features of the country inhabited by the Thompson River Indians originated through his agency. In many of his actions he appears as the trickster, and all his methods are based on sly cunning. The series of Coyote legends of this tribe resembles very much the Coyote tales with which we are familiar from a number of points on the western plateaus of our continent, and I do not doubt that they belong to this series. In all these tales he appears as a transformer and a culture hero, but he is not moved by the desire of benefiting mankind; he accomplishes all transformations of the world in the pursuit of his own ends.

The second series of transformer myths refer to the three brothers Qoā'qlqal. I do not think that we can interpret the differentiation of transformers in the legends of the Thompson River Indians as due to the developing desire of differentiating the altruistic and egotistic side of this being, because the tales of the Qoā'qlqal do not by any means bring out an altruistic point of view more clearly than those of the Coyote. It seems much more likely that the latter group of legends are simply new traditions introduced from the lower course of Fraser River. A comparison between these tales and the Xäls legends of the tribes who live at the delta of Fraser River and on southeastern Vancouver Island show that these two series are practically identical, except that the Xäls series is very much more elaborate.¹⁰