

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

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

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