

imitation of a speech defect. A myth character whom it is desired to treat humorously may, among other possibilities, be relegated either to the class of poor talkers or to that of nature's step-children. Hence the consonant play of such characters is in part traceable either to speech defects or to mocking-forms. In passing it may be observed that the "enfant terrible" motive is fairly clear in the treatment of many humorous characters of American mythology, and that consonant play may in some cases be taken to symbolize this attitude. The socializing of the *kutāt'oq* habit among certain of the Eskimo forcibly suggests the influence of the speech of children as a contributing factor in the creation of myth-character forms. The Kwakiutl Mink is a very likely example of the "enfant terrible," both in action and speech. The possibility should not be lost sight of, of the use of myth-character forms to apply to a class of people or to an individual in ordinary life. This would be an extension of the well-known American Indian habit of comparing one that is marked by some peculiarity of temper or habit with a favourite mythological character.¹

There is, however, another factor which has undoubtedly exercised a great influence both on the forms of speech used by myth-characters and on the forms peculiar to songs. This is the comic or novel effect produced by the imitation of the speech of foreigners, particularly of such as speak a dialect divergent enough from the home-dialect to be funny or impressive, yet not so different as to be unintelligible and, therefore, lacking in interest. Hence we often find mythological characters in America making use of a neighbouring dialect of the language, as in the case of the Nass River *Txāmsem* and other characters, who talk in the dialect of the Tsimshian proper of Skeena river.² Examples of songs whose texts are in a divergent dialect, not to speak of the common use of a totally distinct language, are frequently met with in and out of America. A well-known instance is the use by Melanesian tribes, according to Codrington, of the dialect of some neighbouring tribe for their own song diction; thus, the Melanesians of Mota (Norfolk

¹ A few interesting examples are given by A. Skinner, *Notes on the Eastern Cree and Northern Saulteaux*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. IX, 1912, p. 82.

² See Boas, *Tsimshian Texts*, Bulletin 27 of Bureau of American Ethnology, 1902, pp. 8, 18, 20, 30, 35, 46, 61-64, 78, 171.